

(3)
T H E

PROVOK'D HUSBAND:

O R,

A Journey to LONDON.

A

C O M E D Y.

As it is ACTED at the

Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane,

By His MAJESTY'S SERVANTS.

Written by Sir JOHN VANBRUGH and Mr. CIBBER.

——— *Vivit tanquam Vicina Mariti.*

Juv. Sat. 6.

D U B L I N:

Printed by GEORGE BONHAM, at Horace's-Head, in
William-street.

M.DCC.LXXIV.

Dramatis Personæ.

- Lord TOWNLY, of a regular }
Life, } Mr. WILKS.
- Lady TOWNLY, immoderate in }
her Pursuit of Pleasures. } Mrs. OLDFIELD.
- Lady GRACE, Sister to Lord }
Townly, of Exemplary Virtue, } Mrs. PORTER.
- Mr. MANLY, her Admirer, } Mr. MILLS, sen.
- Sir FRANCIS WRONGHEAD, }
a Country Gentleman, } Mr. CIBBER, sen.
- Lady WRONGHEAD, his Wife, }
inclin'd to be a fine Lady, } Mrs. THURMOND.
- Squire RICHARD, his Son, a }
meer Whelp, } Young WETHERILT.
- Miss JENNY, his Daughter, Pert }
and Forward, } Mrs. CIBBER.
- JOHN MOODY, his Servant, an }
honest Clown. } Mr. MILLER.
- Count BASSET, a Gamester, } Mr. BRIDGWATER.
- Mrs. MOTHERLY, one that lets }
Lodgings, } Mrs. MOORE.
- MYRTILLA, her Niece, seduced }
by the Count, } Mrs. GRACE.
- Mrs. TRUSTY, Lady Townly's }
Woman, } Mrs. MILLS.

Masqueraders, Constables, Servants, &c.

The SCENE Lord TOWNLY's House, and sometimes
Sir FRANCIS's Lodgings.

P R O L O G U E.

Spoken by Mr. W I L K S.

THIS play took birth from principles of truth,
To make amends for errors past, of youth.
A bard, that's now no more, in riper days,
Conscious review'd the license of his plays:
And though applause his wanton muse had fir'd,
Himself condemn'd what sensual minds admir'd.
At length, he own'd, that plays should let you see
Not only what you are, but ought to be:
Though vice was natural, 'twas never meant,
The stage should shew it, but for punishment:
Warm with that thought, his Muse once more took flame,
Resolv'd to bring licentious life to shame.
Such was the piece his latest pen design'd,
But left no traces of his plan behind.
Luxurious scenes, unprun'd, or half contriv'd;
Yet through the mass, his native fire surviv'd;
Rough as rich ore, in mines the treasure lay,
Yet still 'twas rich, and forms at length a play;
In which the bold compiler boasts no merit,
But that his pains have sav'd you scenes of spirit.
Not scenes, that would a noisy joy impart,
But such as hush the mind, and warm the heart.
From praise of hands no sure account he draws,
But fix'd attention is sincere applause.
If then (for hard you'll own the task) his art
Can to those embryo-scenes new life impart,
The living proudly would exclude his lays,
And to the buried bard resign the praise.

EPILOGUE.

E P I L O G U E.

Spoken by Mrs. OLDFIELD.

METHINKS I hear some powder'd critics say,
“ Damn it! this Wife reform'd has spoil'd the play!
“ The coxcomb should have drawn her more in fashion,
“ Have gratify'd her softer inclination,
“ Have tipt her a gallant, and clinch'd the provocation.” }
But there our bard stop'd short: For 'twere uncivil
T' have made a modern belle, all o'er a devil!
He hop'd, in honour of the sex, the age
Would bear one mended woman——on the stage.

From whence, you see, by common sense's rules,
Wives might be govern'd, were not husbands fools:
Whate'er by nature dames are prone to do,
They seldom stray, but when they govern you.
When the wild wife perceives her deary tame,
No wonder then she plays him all the game.
But men of sense meet rarely that disaster;
Women take pride, where merit is their master:
Nay, she that with a weak man wisely lives,
Will seem t'obey the due commands she gives!
Happy obedience is no more a wonder,
When men are men, and keep them kindly under.
But modern consorts are such high-bred creatures,
They think a husband's power degrades their features:
That nothing more proclaims a reigning beauty,
Than that she never was reproach'd with duty.
And that the greatest blessing heaven e'er sent,
Is in a spouse incurious, and content.

To gives such dames a different cast of thought,
By calling home the mind, these scenes were wrought.
If, with a hand too rude, the task is done,
We hope the scheme, my Lady Grace laid down,
Will all such freedom with the sex atone. }
That virtue there unfoil'd, by modish art,
Throws out attractions for a Manly's heart.

You, you then, Ladies, whose unquestion'd lives,
Give you the foremost fame of happy wives,
Protect, for its attempt, this helpless play,
Nor leave it to the vulgar taste, a prey:
Appear the frequent champions of its cause,
Direct the crowd, and give yourselves applause.

The PROVOK'D HUSBAND :

O R,

A Journey to LONDON.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SCENE, *Lord Townly's Apartment.*

Lord TOWNLY solus.

WHY did I marry?—Was it not evident, my plain, rational scheme of life was impracticable, with a woman of so different a way of thinking?—Is there one article of it, that she has not broke in upon?—Yes—let me do her justice—her reputation—That—I have no reason to believe is in question—but then how long her profligate course of pleasures may make her able to keep it—is a shocking question! and her presumption while she keeps it—insupportable! for on the pride of that single virtue, she seems to lay it down, as a fundamental point, that the free indulgence of every other vice, this fertile town affords, is the birth-right prerogative of a woman of quality—amazing! that a creature so warm in the pursuit of her pleasures, should never cast one thought towards her happiness—thus, while she admits no lover, she thinks it a greater merit still, in her chastity, not to care for her husband; and while she is solacing herself in one continual round of cards and good company, he, poor wretch! is left, at large, to take care of his own contentment—'Tis time, indeed, some care were taken, and speedily there shall be—yet let me not be rash—Perhaps this disappointment of my heart may make me too impatient; and some tempers, when reproach'd, grow more untractable.—Here she comes—let me be calm a while.

Enter Lady Townly.

Going out so soon after dinner, Madam?

La. Town. Lard, my Lord! what can I, possibly, do at home?

L. Town. What does my sister, lady Grace, do at home?

La. Town. Why that is to me amazing! have you ever any pleasure at home?

L. Town. It might be in your power, Madam, I confess, to make it a little more comfortable to me.

La. Town. Comfortable! and so, my good Lord, you would really have a woman of my rank and spirit, stay at home to comfort her husband! lord, what notions of life some men have?

B

L. Town.

6 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND: Or,

L. Town. Don't you think, madam, some ladies notions are full as extravagant?

La. Town. Yes, my lord, when the tame Doves live coop'd within the pen of your precepts, I do think 'em prodigious indeed!

L. Town. And when they fly wild about this town, Madam, pray what must the world think of 'em then.

La. Town. Oh! this world is not so ill-bred, as to quarrel with any woman for liking it.

L. Town. Nor am I, Madam, a husband so well-bred, as to bear my wife's being so fond of it: In short, the life you lead, Madam—

La. Town. Is, to me, the pleasantest life in the world.

L. Town. I should not dispute your taste, madam, if a woman had a right to please no body but herself.

La. Town. Why, whom would you have her please?

L. Town. Sometimes, her husband.

La. Town. And don't you think a husband under the same obligation?

L. Town. Certainly.

La. Town. Why then we are agreed, my Lord—For if I never go abroad, 'till I am weary of being at home—which you know is the case—is it not equally reasonable, not to come home 'till one is weary of being abroad?

L. Town. If this be your rule of life, madam, 'tis time to ask you one serious question?

La. Town. Don't let it be long a coming then—for I am in haste.

L. Town. Madam, when I am serious, I expect a serious answer.

La. Town. Before I know the question?

L. Town. Psha—have I power, Madam, to make you serious, by intreaty?

La. Town. You have.

L. Town. And you promise to answer me sincerely?

La. Town. Sincerely.

L. Town. Now then recollect your thoughts, and tell me seriously, Why you married me?

La. Town. You insist upon truth you say?

L. Town. I think I have a right to it.

La. Town. Why then, my Lord, to give you, at once, a proof of my obedience, and sincerity—I think—I married—to take off that restraint, that lay upon my pleasures while I was a single woman.

L. Town. How, Madam is any woman under less restraint after marriage, than before it?

La. Town. O my Lord! my Lord! they are quite different creatures! wives have infinite liberties in life, that would be terrible in an unmarried woman to take.

L. Town. Name one.

La. Town. Fifty, if you please—to begin then, in the morning

ing—A married woman may have men at her toilette, invite them to dinner, appoint them a party in a stage box at the play; engross the conversation there; call 'em by their christian names; talk louder than the players;—from thence jaunt into the city—take a frolicksome supper at an India House—perhaps, in her *gayeté de cœur* toast a pretty fellow—then clatter again to this end of town, break with the morning into an assembly, crowd to the hazard table, throw a familiar levant upon some sharp lurching man of quality, and if he demands his money, turn it off with a loud laugh, and cry—you'll owe it him, to vex him! ha! ha! ha!

L. Town. Prodigious!

[*Aside.*]

La. Town. These now, my Lord, are some few of the many modish amusements, that distinguish the privilege of a wife from that of a single woman.

L. Town. Death! Madam, what law has made these liberties less scandalous in any wife, than an unmarried woman?

La. Town. Why the strongest law in the world, custom—custom time out of mind, my Lord.

L. Town. Custom, Madam, is the law of fools: but it shall never govern me.

La. Town. Nay then, my Lord, 'tis time for me to observe the laws of prudence.

L. Town. I wish I could see an instance of it.

La. Town. You shall have one this moment, my Lord. For I think, when a man begins to lose his temper at home, if a woman has any prudence, why,—she'll go abroad 'till he comes to himself again.

[*Going.*]

L. Town. Hold, Madam—I am amaz'd you are not more uneasy at the life we lead! you don't want sense! and yet seem void of all humanity! for with a blush I say it, I think I have not wanted love.

La. Town. Oh! don't say that, my Lord, if you suppose I have my senses!

L. Town. What is it I have done to you? what can you complain of?

La. Town. Oh! nothing in the least: 'tis true, you have heard me say I have owed my lord Lurcher an hundred pounds these three weeks—but what then—a husband is not liable to his wife's debts of honour, you know,—and if a silly woman will be uneasy about money she can't be sued for, what's that to him? as long as he loves her, to be sure, she can have nothing to complain of.

L. Town. By heav'n, if my whole fortune thrown into your lap could make you delight in the chearful duties of a wife, I should think myself a gainer by the purchase.

La. Town. That is, my Lord, I might receive your whole estate, provided you were sure I would not spend a shilling of it.

L. Town. No, Madam; were I master of your heart your pleasures

8 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND: Or,

pleasures wou'd be mine; but, different as they are, I'll feed even your follies, to deserve it—perhaps, you may have some other trifling debts of honour, abroad, that keep you out of humour at home—at least it shall not be my fault if I have not more of your company—There, there's a bill of five hundred, —and now, Madam——

La. Town. And now, my Lord; down to the ground I thank you—now am I convinced, were I weak enough to love this man, I should never get a single guinea from him. [*Aside.*]

L. Town. If it be no offence, Madam——

La. Town. Say what you please, my Lord! I am in that harmony of spirits, it is impossible to put me out of humour.

L. Town. How long, in reason then, do you think that sum ought to last you?

La. Town. Oh! my dear, dear lord! now you have spoil'd all again! how is it possible I should answer for an event, that so utterly depends upon fortune? but to shew you, that I am more inclin'd to get money, than to throw it away—I have a strong possession, that, with this five hundred, I shall win five thousand.

L. Town. Madam, if you were to win ten thousand, it would be no satisfaction to me.

La. Town. O! the churl! ten thousand! what! not so much as with I might win ten thousand!—ten thousand! O! the charming sum! what infinite pretty things might a woman of spirit do, with ten thousand guineas! O' my conscience, if she were a woman of true spirit—she—she might lose 'em all again!

L. Town. And I had rather it should be so, Madam; provided I could be sure, that were the last you would lose.

La. Town. Well, my Lord, to let you see I design to play all the good house-wife I can; I am now going to a party at Quadrille, only to piddle with a little of it, at poor two guineas a fish, with the Dutchess of Quiteright. [*Exit Lady Townly.*]

L. Town. Insensible creature! neither reproaches, or indulgence, kindness, or severity, can awake her to the least reflection! continual licence has lull'd her into such a lethargy of care, that she speaks of her excesses with the same easy confidence, as if they were so many virtues. What a turn has her head taken! —but how to cure it—I am afraid the physick must be strong that reaches her—lenitives, I see, are to no purpose—take my friend's opinion—Manly will speak freely—my sister with tenderness to both sides. They know my case—I'll talk with 'em.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Mr. Manly, my Lord, has sent to know if your lordship was at home.

L. Town. They did not deny me?

Ser. No, my Lord.

L. Town. Very well; step up to my Sister, and say, I desire to speak with her.

Ser.

Ser. Lady Grace is here, my Lord.

(Exit Serv.)

Enter Lady Grace.

L. Town. So, lady fair: what pretty weapon have you been killing your time with?

La. Grace. A huge folio, that has almost kill'd me—I think I have half read my eyes out.

L. Town. Oh! you should not pore so much just after dinner, child.

La. Grace. That's true, but any body's thoughts are better than always one's own, you know.

L. Town. Who's there?

Enter Servant.

Leave word at the door, I am at home to no body but Mr. Manly.

La. Grace. And why is he excepted, pray my lord?

L. Town. I hope, Madam, you have no objection to his company.

La. Grace. Your particular orders, upon my being here, look, indeed, as if you thought I had not.

L. Town. And your ladyship's inquiry into the reason of these orders, shew, at least, it was not a matter indifferent to you!

La. Grace. Lord! you make the oddest constructions, brother.

L. Town. Look you, my grave lady Grace—in one serious word—I wish you had him.

La. Grace. I can't help that.

L. Town. Ha! you can't help it! ha! ha! the flat simplicity of that reply was admirable!

La. Grace. Pooh! you teize one, brother!

L. Town. Come, I beg pardon, child—this is not a point, I grant you, to trifle upon; therefore, I hope you'll give me leave to be serious.

La. Grace. If you desire it, brother; tho' upon my word, as to Mr. Manly's having any serious thoughts of me—I know nothing of it.

L. Town. Well—there's nothing wrong, in your making a doubt of it—but in short, I find, by his conversation of late, he has been looking round the world for a wife; and, if you were to look round the world for a husband, he's the first man I would give to you.

La. Grace. Then, whenever he makes me any offer, brother, I will certainly tell you of it.

L. Town. Oh! that's the last thing he'll do: he'll never make you any offer, till he's pretty sure it won't be refus'd

La. Grace. Now you make me curious. Pray did he ever make any offer of that kind to you?

L. Town. Not directly: but that imports nothing: he is a man too well acquainted with the female world, to be brought into a high opinion of any one woman without some well examin'd proof of her merit: yet I have reason to believe, that your

B 3

good

good sense, your turn of mind, and your way of life, have brought him to so favourable a one of you, that a few days will reduce him to talk plainly to me: which as yet (notwithstanding our friendship) I have neither declin'd, nor encourag'd him to.

La. Grace. I am mighty glad we are so near in our way of thinking: for to tell you the truth, he is much upon the same terms with me: you know he has a satyrical turn; but never lashes any folly without giving due encomiums to its opposite virtue: and upon such occasions he is sometimes particular, in turning his compliments upon me, which I receive without any reserve, lest he should imagine I take them to myself.

L. Town. You are right, child: when a man of merit makes his addresses, good sense may give him an answer, without scorn or coquetry.

La. Grace. Hush! he's here——

Enter Mr. Manly.

Man. My Lord, your most obedient.

L. Town. Dear Manly! yours—I was thinking to send to you.

Man. Then, I am glad I am here, my Lord—lady Grace, I kiss your hands!—what, only you two! how many visits may a man make, before he falls into such unfashionable company? a brother and sister soberly sitting at home, when the whole town is a gadding! I question if there is so particular a *tete a tete*, again, in the whole parish of St. James's!

La. Grace. Fy, fy, Mr. Manly; how censorious you are!

Man. I had not made the reflection, Madam, but that I saw you an exception to it—where's my Lady?

L. Town. That, I believe, is impossible to guess.

Man. Then I won't try, my Lord——

L. Town. But, 'tis probable I may hear of her, by that time I have been four or five hours in bed.

Man. Now if that were my case, I believe I shou'd—but I beg pardon, my Lord.

L. Town. Indeed, Sir, you shall not: you will oblige me, if you speak out; for it was upon this head, I wanted to see you.

Man. Why then, my Lord, since you oblige me to proceed.—If that were my case—I believe I shou'd certainly sleep in another house.

La. Grace. How do you mean?

Man. Only a compliment, Madam.

La. Grace. A compliment!

Man. Yes, Madam, in rather turning myself out of doors than her.

La. Grace. Don't you think, that would be going too far?

Man. I don't know but it might, Madam; for in strict justice, I think, she ought rather to go, than I.

La. Grace. This is new doctrine, Mr. Manly.

Man. As old, Madam, as love, honour and obey! when a woman

woman will stop at nothing, that's wrong, why should a man balance any thing that's right?

La. Grace. Bless me! but this is fomenting things—

Man. Fomentations, Madam, are sometimes necessary to dispel tumours; tho' I don't directly advise my Lord to do this—This is only what, upon the same provocation, I would do myself.

La. Grace. Ay, ay, you would do! batchelors wives, indeed, are finely govern'd.

Man. If the married men's were as well—I am apt to think we should not see so many mutual plagues taking the air, in separate coaches!

La. Grace. Well, but suppose it your own case, would you part with a wife, because she now and then stays out in the best company?

L. Town. Well said, Lady Grace! come, stand up for the privileges of your sex! This is like to be a warm debate! I shall edify.

Man. Madam, I think a wife, after midnight, has no occasion to be in better company than her husband's; and that frequent unseasonable hours make the best company—the worst company she can fall into.

La. Grace. But, if people of condition are to keep company with one another; how is it possible to be done, unless one conforms to their hours?

Man. I can't find, that any woman's good breeding obliges her to conform to other people's vices.

L. Town. I doubt, child, here we are got a little on the wrong side of the question.

La. Grace. Why so, my Lord? I can't think the case so bad, as Mr. Manly states it—People of quality are not ty'd down to the rules of those, who have their fortunes to make.

Man. No people, Madam, are above being ty'd down to some rules, that have fortunes to lose.

La. Grace. Pooh! I'm sure, if you were to take my side of the argument, you would be able to say something more of it.

L. Town. Well! what say you to that, Manly?

Man. Why 'troth, my Lord, I have something to say.

La. Grace. Ay! that I should be glad to hear now!

L. Town. Out with it!

Man. Then, in one word, this, my Lord; I have often thought, that the misconduct of my Lady has, in a great measure, been owing to your Lordship's treatment of her.

La. Grace. Bless me!

L. Town. My treatment!

Man. Ay, my Lord, you so idoliz'd her before marriage, that you even indulged her, like a mistress, after it: In short, you continued the lover, when you should have taken up the husband.

La. Grace. O frightful! this is worse than t'other! can a husband love a wife too well!

Man,

Man. As easily, Madam, as a wife may love a husband too little.

L. Town. So! you two are never like to agree, I find.

La. Grace. Don't be positive, brother;—I am afraid we are both of a mind already. [*Aside.*] And do you, at this rate, ever hope to be married, Mr. Manly?

Man. Never, Madam; 'till I can meet with a woman that likes my doctrine.

La. Grace. 'Tis pity but your mistress should hear it.

Man. Pity me, Madam, when I marry the woman that won't hear it.

La. Grace. I think, at least, he can't say, that's me. [*Aside.*]

Man. And so, my Lord, by giving her more power than was needful, she has none where she wants it; having such entire possession of you, she is not mistress of herself! And, mercy on us! how many fine women's heads have been turn'd upon the same occasion!

L. Town. O Manly! 'tis too true! there's the source of my disquiet! she knows, and has abus'd her power! Nay, I'm still so weak (with shame I speak it) 'tis not an hour ago, that in the midst of my impatience—I gave her another bill for five hundred, to throw away.

Man. Well—my Lord! to let you see, I am sometimes upon the side of good-nature, I won't absolutely blame you; for the greater your indulgence, the more you have to reproach her with.

La. Grace. Ay, Mr. Manly! here now, I begin to come in with you: who knows, my Lord, but you may have a good account of your kindness?

Man. That, I am afraid, we had not best depend upon: but, since you have had so much patience, my Lord, even go on with it a day or two more! and upon her ladyship's next rally, be a little rounder in your expostulation; if that don't work—drop her some cool hints of determin'd reformation, and leave her—to breakfast upon 'em.

L. Town. You are perfectly right! how valuable is a friend, in our anxiety?

Man. Therefore to divert that, my Lord, I beg, for the present we may call another cause.

La. Grace. Ay! for goodness sake let's have done with this.

L. Town. With all my heart.

La. Grace. Have you no news abroad, Mr. Manly?

Man. A propos—I have some, Madam; and I believe, my Lord, as extraordinary, in its kind——

L. Town. Pray let's have it.

Man. Do you know that your country neighbour, and my wife kinsman, Sir Francis Wronghead, is coming to town with his whole family?

L. Town. The fool! what can be his business here?

Man.

fortune,

Man. Oh! of the last importance, I'll assure you—no less than the business of the nation.

L. Town. Explain!

Man. He has carried his election—against Sir John Worthland.

L. Town. The deuce! what! for—for——

Man. The famous borough of Guzzledown!

L. Town. A proper representative, indeed.

La. Grace. Pray, Mr. Manly, don't I know him?

Man. You have din'd with him, Madam, when I was last down with my Lord at Bellmont.

La. Grace. Was not that he, that got a little merry before dinner, and overset the tea-table, in making his compliments to my Lady?

Man. The same.

La. Grace. Pray what are his circumstances? I know but very little of him.

Man. Then he is worth your knowing, I can tell you, Madam. His estate, if clear, I believe, might be a good two thousand pounds a year: though, as it was left him, saddled with two jointures, and two weighty mortgages upon it, there is no saying what it is—but that he might be sure never to mend it, he married a profuse, young huffy for love, without ever a penny of money! thus having, like his brave ancestors, provided heirs for the family (for his dove breeds like a tame pigeon) he now finds children and interest money make such a balling about his ears, that, at last, he has taken the friendly advice of his kinsman, the good Lord Danglecourt, to run his estate two thousand pounds more in debt, and to put the whole management of what's left into Paul Pillage's hands, that he may be at leisure himself to retrieve his affairs, by being a Parliament Man.

L. Town. A most admirable scheme, indeed!

Man. And with this politick prospect, he's now upon his journey to London——

L. Town. What can it end in?

Man. Pooh, a journey into the country again.

L. Town. Do you think he'll stir, 'till his money's gone? or at least, till the session is over?

Man. If my intelligence is right, my Lord, he won't sit long enough to give his vote for a turn-pike.

L. Town. How so?

Man. O! a better business! he had scarce a vote in the whole town beside the returning officer. Sir John will certainly have it heard at the bar of the house, and send him about his business again.

L. Town. Then he has made a fine business of it, indeed!

Man. Which, as far as my little interest will go, shall be done, in as few days as possible.

La. Grace. But why would you ruin the poor gentleman's fortune, Mr. Manly?

Man.

14 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND: Or,

Man. No, madam, I would only spoil his project, to save his fortune.

La. Grace. How are you concern'd enough, to do either?

Man. Why—I have some obligations to the family, Madam: I enjoy at this time a pretty estate, which Sir Francis was heir at law to: but—by his being a booby, the last will of an obstinate old uncle gave it me.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. [to Manly.] Sir, here's one of your servants from your house, desires to speak with you.

Man. Will you give him leave to come in, my Lord?

L. Town. Sir—the ceremony's of your own making.

Enter Manly's Servant.

Man. Well, James, what's the matter now?

Jam. Sir, here's John Moody's just come to town; he says Sir Francis, and all the family, will be here to-night, and is in a great hurry to speak with you.

Man. Where is he?

Jam. At our house, Sir: he has been gaping and slumping about the streets, in his dirty boots, and asking every one he meets, if they can tell him, where he may have a good lodging for a parliament-man, 'till he can hire a handsome whole house fit for all his family, for the winter.

Man. I am afraid, my Lord, I must wait upon Mr. Moody.

L. Town. Pr'ythe let's have him here: He will divert us.

Man. O, my Lord! he's such a cub! Not but he's so near common sense, that he passes for a wit in the family.

La. Grace. I beg of all things, we may have him! I am in love with nature, let her dress be ever so homely!

Man. Then desire him to come hither, James. [*Exit James.*]

La. Grace. Pray what may be Mr. Moody's post?

Man. O! his *maitre d'hotel*, his butler, his bailiff, his hind, his huntsman, and sometimes——his companion.

L. Town. It runs in my head, that the moment this Knight has set him down in the house, he will get up, to give them the earliest proof, of what importance he is to the public, in his own country.

Man. Yes, and when they have heard him, he will find, that his utmost importance stands valued at—sometimes being invited to dinner.

La. Grace. And her Ladyship, I suppose, will make as considerable a figure in her sphere too.

Man. That you may depend upon: For (if I don't mistake) she has ten times more of the jade in her, than she yet knows of, and she will so improve in this rich soil, in a month, that she will visit all the ladies, that will let her into their houses, and run in debt to all the shop-keepers that will let her into their books: In short, before her important spouse has made five pounds,

pounds, by his eloquence, at Westminster; she will have lost five hundred at dice, and quadrille, in the parish of St. James's.

L. Town. So that, by that time he is declared unduly elected, a swarm of duns will be ready for their money; and his worship —will be ready for a jail.

Man. Yes, yes, that I reckon will close the account of this hopeful Journey to London—But see here comes the fore-horse of the team!

Enter John Moody.

Oh! honest John!

J. Mood. Ad's wounds, and heart, Master Manly! I'm glad I ha' fun ye. Lawd! lawd! give me a buss! Why that's friendly naw! Flesh! I thought we should never ha' got hither! Well! and how d'ye do, master!—Good lack! I beg pardon for my bawldness—I did not see 'as his honour was here.

L. Town. Mr. Moody, your servant: I am glad to see you in London. I hope all the good family is well?

J. Mood. Thanks be prais'd your honour, they are all in pretty good heart; thof' we have had a power of crosses upo' the road.

La. Grace. I hope my Lady has had no hurt, Mr. Moody.

J. Mood. Noa, and please your Ladyship, she was never in better humour. There's money enough stirring now.

Man. What has been the matter, John?

J. Mood. Why we came up in such a hurry, you mun think, that our tackle was not so right as it should be.

Man. Come, tell us all—Pray how do they travel?

J. Mood. Why i' th' awld coach, Measter, and cause my Lady love to do things handsome, to be sure, she would have a couple of cart-horses clapt to th' four old geldings, that neighbours might see she went up to London, in her coach and six! And so Giles Joulter the plowman rides postillion!

Man. Very well! the journey sets out as it should do. [*Aside.* What, do they bring all the children with them too?

J. Mood. Noa, noa, only the young Squoire, and Miss Jenny. The other foive are all out at board, at half a crown a head a week, with Joan Growse, at Smoak Dunghill farm.

Man. Good again. A right English Academy for younger children!

J. Mood. Anon, Sir!

[*Not understanding him.*

La. Grace. Poor souls! What will become of 'em?

J. Mood. Nay, nay, for that matter, Madam, they are in very good hauds: Joan loves 'um, an as thof' they were all her own: For she was wet-nurse to every mother's babe of 'um—Ay, ay, they'll ne'er want for a belly-full there!

La. Grace. What simplicity!

Man. The lud 'a mercy upon all good folks! What work will these people make!

[*Holding up his hands.*

L. Town. And when do you expect them here, John?

J. Mood.

J. Mood. Why we were in hopes to ha' come yesterday, an' it had not 'been, that the awld wheeze belly horse tyr'd: And then we were so cruelly loaden, that the two fore-wheels came crash! down at once, in Waggon-Rut-Lane, and there we los't four hours, afore we could set things to rights again.

Man. So they bring all their baggage with the coach then?

J. Mood. Ay! ay! and good store on't there is—Why my Lady's geer alone were as much as fill'd four portmantel trunks, beside the great deal box, that heavy Ralph and the monkey sit upon behind.

Ld. La. and Man. Ha, ha, ha!

La. Grace. Well, Mr. Moody, and pray how many are they within the coach?

J. Mood. Why there's my Lady, and his Worship; and the young Squoire, and Miss Jenny, and the fat lap-dog, and my Lady's maid, Mrs. Handy, and Doll Tripe the cook, that's all—Only Doll puked a little with riding backwards, so they hoisted her into the coach-box—And then her stomach was easy.

La. Grace. Oh! I see 'em! I see 'em go by me—Ha! ha!

[*Laughing.*]

J. Mood. Then you mun think, Measter, there was some stowage for the belly, as well as th' back too: Childer are apt to be famisht upo' th' road; so we had such cargoes of plum-cake, and baskets of tongues, and biscuits, and cheese, and cold boil'd beef—And then, in case of sickness, bottles of cherry-brandy, plague-water, sack, tent, and strong beer so plenty as made th' awld coach crack again! Mercy upon them! and send 'em all well to town, I say.

Man. Ay! And well out on't again, John.

J. Mood. Ods bud, Measter, your a wise Mon; and for that matter, so am I—Whoam's whoam, I say: I'm sure we ha' got but little good, e'er sin' we turn'd our backs on't. Nothing but mischief: Some devil's trick or other plagued us, aw th' day lung! Crack! goes one thing: Bawnce! goes another. Woa, says Roger—Then sowse! we are all set fast in a slough. Whaw! cries Miss! Scream go the maids! and bawl, just as an' thof' they were stuck! And so mercy on us! this was the trade from morning to night. But my Lady was in such murrain haste to be here, that set out she would, thof' I told her it was Childermas-Day.

Man. These Ladies, these Ladies, John—

J. Mood. Ah, Measter, I ha' seen a little of 'em: And I find that the best—when she's mended, won't ha' much goodness to spare.

L. Town. Well said, John. Ha! ha!

Man. I hope at least, you and your good woman agree still.

J. Mood. Ay! ay! much of a muchness. Bridget sticks to me: Thof' as for goodness—why she was willing to come to London too—But hawld a bit! Noa, noa, says I, there may be mischief enough done, without you.

Man.

Man. Why that was bravely spoken, John, and like a man.

J. Mood. Ah, weast heart! were Measter but hawf the Mon that I am—Ods wookers! thof' he'll speak—stawtly too-some-times—But then he canno' hawld it—no! he canno' hawld it.

Ld. La. and Man. Ha! ha! ha!

J. Mood. Ods flesh! But I mun hye me whoam! th' coach will be coming every hour naw—but Measter charged me to find your worship out; for he has huge busines with you; and will certainly wait upon you, by that time he can put on a clean neck-cloth.

Man. O John, I'll wait upon him.

J. Mood. Why you wonno' be so kind, wull ye?

Man. If you'll tell me where you lodge.

J. Mood. Just i' th' fstreet next to where your worship dwells, at the sign of the Golden-Ball—It's gold all over; where they sell ribbands, and flappits, and other sort of geer for gentlewomen.

Man. A milliner's?

J. Mood. Ay, ay, one Mrs. Motherly's; Waunds! she has a couple of clever girls there a stitching i' th' fore-room.

Man. Yes, yes, she is a woman of good busines, no doubt on't—Who recommended that house to you, John?

J. Mood. The greatest good fortune in the world, sure! For as I was gaping about the streets, who should look out of the window there, but the fine gentleman, that was always riding by our coach side, at York races—Count—Count Basset: Ay, that's he.

Man. Basset? Oh, I remember! I know him by sight.

J. Mood. Well! to be sure, as civil a gentleman, to see to—

Man. As any sharper in town.

[*Aside.*

J. Mood. At York, he us'd to breakfast with my Lady every morning.

Man. Yes, yes, and I suppose her Ladyship will return his compliment here in town.

[*Aside.*

J. Mood. Well, Measter—

L. Town. My service to Sir Francis, and my Lady, John.

La. Grace. And mine, pray, Mr. Moody.

J. Mood. Ah, your honours, they'll be proud on't, I dare say.

Man. I'll bring my compliments myself: So, honest John—

J. Mood. Dear Measter Monly! the goodness of goodness bless and preserve you!

[*Exit John Moody.*

L. Town. What a natural creature 'tis!

La. Grace. Well, I can't but think John, in a wet afternoon in the country, must be very good company.

L. Town. O! the Tramontane! if this were known at half the Quadrille-tables in town, they wou'd lay down their cards to laugh at you.

La. Grace. And the minute they took them up again, they would do the same at the losers—But to let you see, that I think

18 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND: Or,

good company may sometimes want cards, to keep them together, what think you if we three sit soberly down, to kill an hour at Ombre?

Man. I shall be too hard for you, Madam.

La. Grace. No matter! I shall have as much advantage of my Lord, as you have of me.

L. Town. Say you so, Madam? Have at you then! Here! Get the Ombre-table, and cards. [Exit L. Town.]

La. Grace. Come, Mr. Manly—I know you don't forgive me now!

Man. I don't know whether I ought to forgive your thinking so, Madam. Where do you imagine I could pass my time so agreeably?

La. Grace. I am sorry my Lord is not here to take share of the compliment—But he'll wonder what's become of us.

Man. I'll follow in a moment, Madam—[Exit La. Grace.] it must be so—She sees, I love her—Yet with what unoffending decency she avoids an explanation? How amiable is every hour of her conduct? What a vile opinion have I had of the whole sex, for these ten years past, which this sensible creature has recovered in less than one? Such a companion, sure, might compensate all the irksome disappointments, their pride, folly, and falshood ever gave me!

Could women regulate, like her, their lives,
What Halcyon days were in the gift of wives!
Vain rovers then might envy what they hate,
And only fools would mock the married state.

[Exit.]

A C T II. S C E N E I.

S C E N E *Mrs. Motherly's House.*

Enter Count Basset and Mrs. Motherly.

C. Bass. **I** TELL you, there is not such a family in England, for you! Do you think I would have gone out of your lodgings for any body, that was not sure to make you easy for the winter.

Moth. Nay, I see nothing against it, Sir, but the gentleman's being a parliament-man; and then people may, as it were, think one impertinent, or be out of humour, you know, when a body comes to ask for one's own—

C. Bass. Psha! Prythee never trouble thy head—His pay is as good as the bank!—Why he has above two thousand pounds a year!

Moth. Alas-a-day! that's nothing: Your people of ten thousand a year, have ten thousand things to do with it.

C. Bass. Nay, if you are afraid of being out of your money; what do you think of going a little with me, Mrs. Motherly?

Moth. As how?

C. Bass.

C. Bas. Why I have a game in my hand, in which, if you'll croup me, that is, help me to play it, you shall go five hundred to nothing.

Moth. Say you so?—Why then, I go, Sir—and now pray let's see your game.

C. Bas. Look you, in one word, my cards lie thus—When I was down this summer at York, I happened to lodge in the same house with this Knight's Lady, that's now coming to lodge with you.

Moth. Did you so, Sir?

C. Bas. And sometimes had the honour to breakfast, and pass an idle hour with her—

Moth. Very good; and here I suppose you would have the impudence to sup, and be busy with her.

C. Bas. Pshaw, pr'ythee hear me!

Moth. Is this your game? I would not give six-pence for it! What, you have a passion for her pin-money—no, no, country ladies are not so flush of it!

C. Bas. Nay, if you won't have patience—

Moth. One had need have a good deal, I'm sure, to hear you talk at this rate! Is this your way of making my poor niece Myrtilla easy?

C. Bas. Death! I shall do it still, if the woman will but let me speak—

Moth. Had you not a letter from her this morning?

C. Bas. I have it here in my pocket—this is it.

[Shews it and puts it up again.]

Moth. Ay, but I don't find you have made any answer to it.

C. Bas. How the devil can I, if you won't hear me?

Moth. What, hear you talk of ano her woman?

C. Bas. O lud! O lud! I tell you, I'll make her fortune—'ounds! I'll marry her.

Moth. A likely matter! if you would not do it when she was a maid, your stomach is not so sharp set, now, I presume.

C. Bas. Hey dey, why your head begins to turn, my dear! the devil! you did not think I propos'd to marry her myself?

Moth. If you don't, who the devil do you think will marry her?

C. Bas. Why, a fool—

Moth. Humph, there may be sense in that—

C. Bas. Very good—one for t'other then; if I can help her to a husband, why should not you come into my scheme of helping me to a wife?

Moth. Your pardon, Sir! ay! in an honourable affair, you know, you command me—but pray where is this blessed wife and husband to be had?

C. Bas. Now have a little patience—you must know then, this country knight, and his lady, bring up in the coach with them, their eldest son, and a daughter to teach them to—wash their faces, and turn their toes out.

Moth. Good!

C. Bas. The son is an unlick'd whelp, about sixteen, just taken from school; and begins to hanker after every wench in the family: the daughter, much of the same age, a pert forward hussy, who having eight thousand pound, left her by an old doating grandmother, seems to have a devilish mind to be doing in her way too.

Moth. And your design is to put her into business for life?

C. Bas. Look you, in short, Mrs. Motherly, we gentlemen whose occasional chariots roll only upon the four aces, are liable sometimes, you know, to have a wheel out of order: which, I confess, is so much my case, at present, that my dapple greys are reduced to a pair of ambling chair-men: now, if, with your assistance, I can whip up this young jade into a hackney-coach, I may chance, in a day or two after, to carry her in my own chariot, *en famille*, to an opera. Now what do you say to me?

Moth. Why, I shall not sleep—for thinking of it. But how will you prevent the family's smoaking your design?

C. Bas. By renewing my addresses to the mother.

Moth. And how will the daughter like that, think you?

C. Bas. Very well—whilst it covers her own affair.

Moth. That's true—it must do—but, as you say, one for 'other, Sir—I stick to that—if you don't do my niece's business with the son, I'll blow you with the daughter, depend upon't.

C. Bas. It's a bett—pay as we go, I tell you, and the five hundred shall be stak'd in a third hand.

Moth. That's honest—but here comes my niece! shall we let her into the secret?

C. Bas. Time enough! may be, I may touch upon it.

Enter Myrtilia.

Moth. So, niece, are all the rooms donè out, and the beds sheeted?

Myr. Yes, madam, but Mr. Moody tells us the lady always burns wax in her own chamber, and we have none in the house.

Moth. Odso! then I must beg your pardon, Count; this is a busy time, you know. *[Exit Mrs. Motherly.]*

C. Bas. Myrtilia! how dost thou do, child?

Myr. As well as a losing gamester can.

C. Bas. Why, what have you lost?

Myr. What I shall never recover; and what's worse, you that have won it, don't seem to be much the better for't.

C. Bas. Why, child, dost thou ever see any body overjoy'd for winning a deep stake, six months after it's over?

Myr. Would I had never play'd for it!

C. Bas. Psha! hang these melancholy thoughts! we may be friends still.

Myr. Dull ones.

C. Bas.

C. Bas. Useful ones, perhaps—suppose I should help thee to a good husband?

Myr. I suppose you'll think any one good enough, that will take me off o' your hands.

C. Bas. What do you think of the young country 'Squire, the heir of the family that's coming to lodge here?

Myr. How should I know what to think of him?

C. Bas. Nay I only give you the hint, child: it may be worth your while, at least to look about you—hark! what buffle's that without?

Enter Mrs. Motherly in haste.

Moth. Sir! Sir! the gentleman's coach is at the door! they are all come!

C. Bas. What, already!

Moth. They are just getting out—won't you step, and lead in my lady? Do you be in the way, niece! I must run and receive them.

[Exit Mrs. Motherly.]

C. Bas. And think of what I told you.

Exit Count.

Myr. Ay! ay! you have left me enough to think of, as long as I live—a faithless fellow! I am sure, I have been true to him; and for that only reason, he wants to be rid of me, and yet 'tis not above six months since, like a merciless high-wayman, he made me deliver all I had in the world—I am sure, I begg'd piteously to save but one poor small bawble! could I but have kept that, I had still kept him: but while women are weak, men will be rogues! and for a bane to both their joys, and ours, when our vanity indulges them, in such innocent favours, as make them adore us, we can never be well, 'till we grant them the very one, that puts an end to their devotion.—But here comes my aunt, and the company.

Mrs. Motherly returns, shewing in lady Wronghead led by count Bassett.

Moth. If your ladyship pleases to walk into this parlour, madam, only for the present, till your servants have got all your things in.

La. Wrong. Well! dear Sir, this is so infinitely obliging—I protest, it gives me pain, tho', to turn you out of your lodging thus!

C. Bas. No trouble in the least, Madam; we single fellows are soon mov'd: besides, Mrs. Motherly's my old acquaintance, and I could not be her hindrance.

Moth. The count is so well bred, madam, I dare say he would do a great deal more to accommodate your ladyship.

La. Wrong. O dear Madam!—a good, well bred sort of a woman.

[Apart to the Count.]

C. Bas. O Madam, she is very much among the people of quality, she is seldom without them in her house.

La. Wrong. Are there a good many people of quality in this street, Mrs. Motherly?

Moth. Now your ladyship is here, Madam, I don't believe there is a house without them.

La. Wrong. I am mighty glad of that! for really I think people of quality should always live among one another.

C. Basf. 'Tis what one would chuse, indeed, Madam.

La. Wrong. Bless me, but where are the children all this while?

Moth. Sir Francis, Madam, I believe is taking care of them.

Sir. Fr. (within.) John Moody! stay you by the coach, and see all our things out—come, children,

Moth. Here they are, Madam.

Enter Sir Francis, Squire Richard, and Miss Jenny.

Sir. Fr. Well, count, I mun say it, this was koynd, indeed!

C. Basf. Sir Francis! give me leave to bid you welcome to London.

Sir Fr. Psha! how dost do, mon?—waunds, I'm glad to see thee! a good sort of a house this!

C. Basf. Is not that master Richard!

Sir Fr. Ey, ey, that's young hopeful—why dost not baw, Dick?

Squ. Rich. So I do, feyther.

C. Basf. Sir, I am glad to see you—I protest Mrs. Jane is grown so, I should not have known her.

Sir Fr. Come forward, Jenny.

Jenny. Sure, papa, do you think I don't know how to behave myself?

C. Basf. If I have permission to approach her, Sir Francis—

Jenny. Lord, Sir! I am in such a frightful pickle—[*Salute.*

C. Basf. Every dress that's proper must become you, Madam, —you have been a long journey.

Jenny. I hope you will see me in a better, to-morrow, Sir. [La. Wrong whispers Mrs. Moth. pointing to Myrtilla.]

Moth. Only a niece of mine, Madam, that lives with me; she will be proud to give your ladyship any assistance, in her power.

La. Wrong. A pretty sort of a young woman—Jenny, you two must be acquainted.

Jenny. O Mamma! I am never strange in a strange place.

[*Salutes Myr.*

Myr. You do me a great deal of honour, Madam—Madam, your ladyship's welcome to London.

Jenny. Mamma, I like her prodigiously she call'd me my ladyship.

Squ. Rich. Pray, Mother, maun't I be acquainted with her too?

La. Wrong. You! you clown! stay till you learn a little more breeding first.

Sir Fr. Od's heart! my lady Wronghead, why do you balk the lad? how should he ever learn breeding, if he does not put himself forward?

Squ.

Squ. Rich. Why ay, feyther, does mother think 'at I'd be uncivil to her?

Myr. Master has so much good humour, Madam, he would soon gain upon any body. [*He kisses Myr.*]

Squ. Rich. Lo' you theere, moather: and you would but be quiet, she and I should do well enough.

La. Wrong. Why how now, firrah! boys must not be so familiar.

Squ. Rich. Why, 'an I know no body, haw the murrain mun I pass my time here, in a strange place? naw you and I, and sister, forsooth, sometimes, in an afternoon, may play at one and thirty bone-ace, purely.

Jenny. Speak for yourself, Sir! d'ye think I play at such clownish games?

Squ. Rich. Why and you wo'ant, yo'ma' let it alone: then, she, and I, may hap, will have a bawt at all fours without you.

Sir Fr. Noa! noa! Dick, that won't do neither! you mun learn to make one at ombre, here, child.

Myr. If master pleases, I'll shew it him.

Squ. Rich. What! th' Humber! hoy day! why does our river run to this town, feyther?

Sir Fr. Pooh! you silly tony! ombre is a game at cards, that the better sort of people play three together at.

Squ. Rich. Nay the moare the merrier, I say; but sister is always so cross-grain'd——

Jenny. Lord! this boy is enough to deaf people—and one has really been stufft up in a coach so long, that—pray, Madam—could not I get a little powder for my hair?

Myr. If you please to come along with me, Madam.

[*Exit Myr. and Jenny.*]

Squ. Rich. What, has sister ta'en her away now! 'mefs I'll go, and have a little game with 'em. [*Exit after them.*]

La. Wrong. Well, count, I hope you won't so far change your lodging, but you will come, and be at home here sometimes?

Sir Fr. Ay, ay, pry'thee come and take a bit of mutton with us, naw and then, when thou'lt nowght to do.

C. Bas. Well, Sir Francis, you shall find I'll make but very little ceremony.

Sir Fr. Why ay, naw, that's hearty!

Moth. Will your ladyship please to refresh yourself, with a dish of tea, after your fatigue? I think I have pretty good.

La. Wrong. If you please, Mrs. Motherly; but I believe we had best to have it above stairs.

Moth. Very well, Madam, it shall be ready immediately.

[*Exit Mrs. Motherly.*]

La. Wrong. Won't you walk up, Sir?

Sir Fr. Moody!

C. Bas. Shan't we stay for Sir Francis, Madam?

La. W.

La. Wrong. Lard! don't mind him: he will come if he likes it.

Sir Fr. Ay, ay, ne'er heed me—I ha' things to look after.

[*Exit Lady Wrong. and Count Bas.*]

Enter John Moody.

J. Moody. Did your worship want muh?

Sir Fr. Ay, is the coach clear'd? and all our things in?

J. Moody. Aw but a few handboxes, and the nook that's left o'th' goose poy—but a plague on him, th' monkey has gin us the slip, I think—I suppose he's goan to see his relations; for here looks to be a power of 'um in this tawn—but heavy Ralph is skawer'd after him.

Sir Fr. Why let him go to the devil! no matter, an the hawnds had him a month ago—but I wish the coach and horses were got safe to th' Inn! this is a sharp tawn, we mun look about us here, John; therefore I would have you goa along with Roger, and see that no body runs away with them before they get to the stable.

J. Moody. Alas-a-day, Sir; I believe our awld cattle woan't yeasily be run away with to-night—but howsomdever, we'll ta' the best care we can of 'um, poor fawls.

Sir Fr. Well, well! make haste then——

[*Moody goes out, and returns.*]

J. Moody. Ods-flesh! here's measter Monly come to wait upo' your worship!

Sir Fr. Where is he?

J. Moody. Just coming in; at threshold.

Sir Fr. Then goa about your business.

[*Exit Moody.*]

Enter Manly.

Cousin Manly! Sir, I am your very humble servant.

Man. I heard you were come, Sir Francis—and——

Sir Fr. Ods-heart! this was so kindly done of you, naw!

Man. I wish you may think it so, cousin! for I confess, I should have been better pleas'd to have seen you in any other place.

Sir Fr. How soa, Sir?

Man. Nay, 'tis for your own sake: I'm not concern'd.

Sir Fr. Look you, cousin, thof' I know you wish me well! yet I don't question I shall give you such weighty reasons for what I have done, that you will say, Sir, this is the wisest journey that ever I made in my life.

Man. I think it ought to be, cousin; for I believe, you will find it the most expensive one—your election did not cost you a trifle, I suppose.

Sir Fr. Why ay! it's true! that—that did lick a little; but if a man's wife, (and I han't fawn'd yet that I'm a fool) there are ways, cousin, to lick one's self whole again.

Man. Nay, if you have that secret.——

Sir Fr. Don't you be fearful, cousin—you'll find that I know something.

Man.

Man. If it be any thing for your good, I should be glad to know it too.

Sir Fr. In short then, I have a friend in a corner, that has let me a little into what's what at Westminster—that's one thing.

Man. Very well, but what good is that to you?

Sir Fr. Why not me, as much as it does other folks?

Man. Other people, I doubt, have the advantage of different qualifications.

Sir Fr. Why ay! there's it naw! you'll say that I have liv'd all my days i' th' country—what then—I'm o' th' Quorum—I have been at sessions, and I have made speeches there! ay, and at a veltty too—and mayhap they may find here,—that I have brought up my tongue up to tawn with me! d'ye take me naw?

Man. If I take your case right, cousin, I am afraid the first occasion you will have for your eloquence here, will be, to shew that you have any right to make use of it at all.

Sir Fr. How d'ye mean?

Man. That Sir John Worthland has lodg'd a petition against you.

Sir Fr. Petition! why ay! there let it lie—we'll find a way to deal with that, I warrant you!—why you forgot, cousin, Sir John's o' th' wrung side, mon!

Man. I doubt, Sir Francis, that will do you but little service; for in cases very notorious (which I take yours to be) there is such a thing as a short day, and dispatching them immediately.

Sir Fr. With all my heart! the sooner I send him home again the better.

Man. And is this the scheme you have laid down, to repair your fortune?

Sir Fr. In one word, cousin, I think it my duty! the Wrongs have been a considerable family, ever since England was England; and since the world knows I have talents wherewithal, they shan't say it's my fault, if I don't make as good a figure as any that ever were at the head on't.

Man. Nay, this project, as you have laid it, will come up to any thing your ancestors have done these five hundred years.

Sir Fr. And let me alone to work it; mayhap, I have not told you all neither.—

Man. You astonish me! what! and is it full as practicable as what you have told me?

Sir Fr. Ay, tho' I say it—every whit, cousin! you'll find that I have more irons i' th' fire than one! I doan't come of a fool's errand!

Man. Very well.

Sir Fr. In a word, my wife has got a friend at court, as well as myself, and her dowghter Jenny is naw pretty well grown up—

Man. (*Aside.*)—And what in the devil's name would he do with the dowdy?

Sir Fr.

Sir Fr. Naw, if I doan't lay in for a husband for her, mayhap, i'this town, she may be looking out for herself.—

Man. Not unlikely.

Sir Fr. Therefore I have some thoughts of getting her to be maid of honour.

Man. (*Aside.*) Oh, he has taken my breath away! but I must hear him out.—Pray, Sir Francis, do you think her education has yet qualified her for a court?

Sir Fr. Why, the girl is a little too mettlesome it's true, but she has tongue enough: she woan't be daft! then she shall learn to daunce forthwith, and that will soon teach her haw to stond still, you know.

Man. Very well; but when she is thus accomplisht, you must still wait for a vacancy.

Sir Fr. Why, I hope one has a good chance for that every day, cousin: for if I take it right, that's a post that folks are not more willing to get into, than they are to get out of.—It's like an orange tree, upon that account—it will bear blossoms, and fruit that's ready to drop, at the same time.

Man. Well, Sir, you best know how to make good your pretensions! but pray where is my Lady, and my young cousins? I should be glad to see them too.

Sir Fr. She's but just taking a dish of tea with the count and my landlady—I'll call her down.

Man. No, no, if she's engaged, I shall call again.

Sir Fr. Ods-heart! but you mun see her naw, cousin; what, the best friend I have in the world!—here, sweet-heart, (to a servant without) prithee desire my Lady and the gentleman to come down a bit; tell her, here's cousin Manly come to wait upon her.

Man. Pray, Sir, who may the gentleman be?

Sir Fr. You mun know him to be sure; why it's count Basset.

Man. Oh! is it he?—your family will be infinitely happy in his acquaintance.

Sir Fr. Troth, I think so too: he's the civilest man that ever I knew in my life—why, here he would go out of his own lodging, at an hour's warning, purely to oblige my family. Wasn't that kind, naw?

Man. Extremely civil—the family is in admirable hands already!

Sir Fr. Then my Lady likes him hugely—all the time of York races, she would never be without him.

Man. That was happy, indeed! and a prudent man, you know, should always take care that his wife may have innocent company.

Sir Fr. Why ay, that's it! and I think there would not be such another!

Man. Why truly, for her purpose, I think not.

Sir Fr. Only naw and then, he—he stonds a little too much upon ceremony; that's his fault.

Man. Onever fear, he'll mend ever day—mercy on us! what a head he has!

Sir Fr. So, here they come.

Enter Lady Wronghead, Count Bassett, and Mrs. Motherly.

La. Wrong. Cousin Manly! this is infinitely obliging: I am extremely glad to see you.

Man. Your most obedient servant, Madam; I am glad to see your Ladyship look so well, after your journey.

La. Wrong. Why! really coming to London is apt to put a little more life in one's looks.

Man. Yet the way of living here, is very apt to deaden the complexion—and give me leave to tell you, as a friend, Madam, you are come to the worst place in the world for a good woman to grow better in.

La. Wrong. Lord, cousin! how should people ever make any figure in life, that are always moap'd up in the country!

C. Basf. Your Ladyship certainly takes the thing in a right light, Madam. Mr. Manly, your humble servant—a-hem.

Man. Familiar puppy. [*Aside.*] Sir, your most obedient—I must be civil to the rascal, to cover my suspicion of him. [*Aside.*

C. Basf. Was you at White's this morning, Sir?

Man. Yes, Sir, I just call'd in.

C. Basf. Pray—what—was there any thing done there?

Man. Much as usual, Sir, the same daily carcasses, and the same crows about them.

C. Basf. The Demoivre baronet had a bloody tumble, yesterday.

Man. I hope, Sir, you had your share of him?

C. Basf. No faith! I came when it was all over—I think I just made a couple of betts with him, took up a cool hundred, and so went to the King's-Arms.

La. Wrong. What a genteel easy manner he has! [*Aside.*

Man. A very hopeful acquaintance I have made here. [*Aside.*

Enter Squire Richard with a wet brown paper on his face.

Sir Fr. How naw, Dick! What's the matter with thy forehead, lad?

Squ. Rich. I ha' gotten a knuck upon't.

La. Wrong. And how did you come by it, you heedless creature?

Squ. Rich. Why I was but running after sister, and t'other young woman, into a little room just naw: And so with that they flupt the door full in my face, and gave me such a whurr here—I thought they had beaten my brains out! so I got a dab of wet brown paper here, to swage it a while.

La. Wrong. They serv'd you right enough! will you never have done with your horse-play?

Sir Fr. Pooh! never heed it, lad! it will be well by to-morrow—the boy has a strong head!

Man. Yes truly, his skull seems to be of a comfortable thickness. [*Aside.*]

Sir Fr.

Sir Fr. Come, Dick, here's cousin Manly—Sir, this is your god-son.

La. *Wrong*. Oh here's my daughter too.

Enter Miss Jenny.

Squ. Rich. Honour'd gudfeyther! I crave leave to ask your blessing.

Man. Thou hast it, child—and if it will do thee any good, may it be to make thee, at least, as wise a man as thy father.

La. *Wrong*. Miss Jenny! don't you see your cousin, child?

Man. And for thee, my pretty dear—[*Salutes her.*] may'st thou be, at least, as good a woman as thy mother.

Jen. I wish I may ever be so handsome, Sir.

Man. Hah! Miss Pert! Now that's a thought, that seems to have been hatcht in the girl on this side Highgate. [*Aside.*]

Sir Fr. Her tongue is a little nimble, Sir.

La. *Wrong*. That's only from her country education, Sir Francis. You know she has been kept too long there—so I brought her to London, Sir, to learn a little more reserve and modesty.

Man. O, the best place in the world for it—every woman she meets will teach her something of it—There's the good gentlewoman of the house, looks like a knowing person; even she perhaps will be so good as to shew her a little London behaviour.

Moth. Alas, Sir, Miss won't stand long in need of my instructions.

Man. That I dare say: What thou canst teach her, she will soon be mistress of.

Moth. If she does, Sir, they shall always be at her service.

La. *Wrong*. Very obliging, indeed, Mrs. Motherly.

Sir Fr. Very kind and civil truly—I think we are got into a mighty good hawse here.

Man. O yes, and very friendly company.

C. *Baf*. Humph, I'gad, I don't like his looks—he seems a little smoaky—I believe I had as good brush off—if I stay, I don't know but he may ask me some odd questions. [*Aside.*]

Man. Well, Sir, I believe you and I do but hinder the family—

C. *Baf*. It's very true, Sir—I was just thinking of going—he don't care to leave me, I see: But it's no matter, we have time enough. [*Aside.*] And so, ladies, without ceremony, your humble servant. [*Ex. Count Bassett, and drops a letter.*]

La. *Wrong*. Ha! what paper's this? Some billet-doux, I'll lay my life; but this is no place to examine it. [*Puts it into her pocket.*]

Sir Fr. Why in such haste, cousin?

Man. O! my Lady must have a great many affairs upon her hands, after such a journey.

La. *Wrong*. I believe, Sir, I shall not have much less every day, while I stay in this town, of one sort or other.

Man. Why truly, ladies seldom want employment here, Madam. Jenny.

Jenny. And Mamma did not come to it to be idle, Sir.

Man. Nor you neither, I dare say, my young mistress.

Jenny. I hope not, Sir.

Man. Hah! Miss Mettle—Where are you going, Sir?

Sir Fr. Only to see you to th' door, Sir.

Man. Oh! Sir Francis, I love to come and go, without ceremony.

Sir Fr. Nay, Sir, I must do as you will have me—Your humble servant. [Exit Manly.]

Jenny. This cousin Manly, papa, seems to be but of an odd sort of crusty humour—I don't like him half so well as the Count.

Sir Fr. Pooh! that's another thing, child—Cousin is a little proud, indeed; But however, you must always be civil to him, for he has a deal of money; and nobody knows who he may give it to.

La. Wrong. Psha! Fig for his money; you have so many projects of late about money, since you are a Parliament-man: What! must we make ourselves slaves to his impertinent humours, eight or ten years, perhaps, in hopes to be his heirs? and then he will be just old enough to marry his maid.

Moth. Nay, for that matter, Madam, the town says he is going to be married already.

Sir Fr. Who? cousin Manly?

La. Wrong. To whom, pray?

Moth. Why, is it possible your Ladyship should know nothing of it?—to my Lord Townly's sister, Lady Grace.

La. Wrong. Lady Grace!

Moth. Dear Madam, it has been in the news-papers!

La. Wrong. I don't like that neither.

Sir Fr. Naw, I do; for then it's likely it mayn't be true.

La. Wrong. (*Aside.*) If it is not too far gone; at least it may be worth one's while to throw a rub in his way.

Squ. Rich. Pray, feyther, how lung will it be to supper?

Sir Fr. Odsso, that's true! step to the cook, lad, and ask what she can get us?

Moth. If you please, Sir, I'll order one of my maids to shew her where you may have any thing you have a mind to.

Sir Fr. Thank you kindly, Mrs. Motherly.

Squ. Rich. Ods flesh! what is not it i'th' hawse yet?—I shall be famisht—but howld, I'll go and ask Doll an' there's none o'th' goose poy left.

Sir Fr. Do so; and dost hear, Dick—see if there's e'er a bottle o'th' strung beer that came i'th' coach with us—if there be, clap a toast in it, and bring it up.

Squ. Rich. With a little nutmeg and sugar, shawn't I, feyther?

Sir Fr. Ay, ay! as thee and I always drink it for breakfast—go thy ways—and I'll fill a pipe i'th' mean while.

Takes one from a Pocket-Case, and fills it. (*Exit Squire Rich.*)

D

La. Wrong.

Jenny.

La. Wrong. This boy is always thinking of his belly.

Sir Fr. Why, my dear, you may allow him to be a little hungry after his journey.

La. Wrong. Nay, ev'n breed him your own way—he has been cramming in or out of the coach all this day, I am sure—I wish my poor girl could eat a quarter as much.

Jenny. O for that I could eat a great deal more, Mamma; but then, mayhap, I should grow coarse, like him, and spoil my shape.

La. Wrong. Ay, so thou wouldst, my dear.

Enter Squire Richard with a full Tankard.

Squ. Rich. Here, feyther, I ha' brought it—it's well I went as I did; for our Doll had just bak'd a toast, and was going to drink it herself.

Sir Fr. Why, then here's to thee, Dick. [Drinks.

Squ. Rich. Thank yow, feyther.

La. Wrong. Lord, Sir Francis! I wonder you can encourage the boy to swill so much of that lubberly liquor—it's enough to make him quite stupid.

Squ. Rich. Why it never hurts me, mother; and I sleep like a Hawnd after it. [Drinks.

Sir Fr. I am sure I ha' drunk it these thirty years, and by your leave, Madam, I don't know that I want wit. Ha! ha!

Jenny. But you might have had a great deal more, papa, if you would have been govern'd by my mother.

Sir Fr. Daughter! he that is govern'd by his wife, has no wit at all.

Jenny. Then I hope I shall marry a fool, Sir, for I love to govern dearly.

Sir Fr. You are too pert, child; it don't do well in a young woman.

La. Wrong. Pray, Sir Francis, don't snub her; she has a fine growing spirit, and if you check her so, you will make her as dull as her brother there.

Squ. Rich. (After a long draught.) Indeed, mother, I think my sister is too forward.

Jenny. You! you think I'm too forward! sure! brother mud! your head's too heavy to think of any thing but your belly.

La. Wrong. Well said, Miss; he's none of your master; tho' he is your elder brother.

Squ. Rich. No, nor she shawn't be my mistress, while she's younger sister!

Sir Fr. Well said, Dick! shew 'em that stawt liquor makes a stawt heart, lad!

Squ. Rich. So I will; and I'll drink ageen, for all her! [Drinks.
Enter John Moody.

Sir Fr. So, John! how are the horses?

J. Mood. Truth, Sir, I ha' noa good opinion o'this tawn, it's made up o' mischief, I think! Sir Fr.

Sir Fr. What's the matter naw?

J. Mood. Why I'll tell your worship—before we were gotten to th' street end, with the coach, here, a great lugger-headed cart, with wheels as thick as a brick wall, laid hawl'd on't, and has poo'd it aw to bits; crack! went the perch, down goes the coach, and whang says the glasses, all to thivers, mercy upon us! and this be London, wou'd we were all well i'th' country ageen.

Jenny. What have you to do, to wish us all in the country again, Mr. Lubber? I hope we shall not go into the country again these seven years, mamma, let twenty coaches be pull'd to pieces.

Sir Fr. Hold your tongue, Jenny, was Roger in no fault, in all this?

J. Mood. Noa, Sir, nor I noather—are not yow asham'd, says Roger, to the carter, to do such an unkind thing by strangers? noa, says he, you bumkin. Sir, he did the thing on very purpose! and so the folks said that stood by—very well, says Roger, you shall see what our meyster will say to ye! your meyster? says he; your meyster may kifs my—and so he clapt his hands just there, an like your worship. Flesh! I thought they had better breeding in this tawn.

Sir Fr. I'll teach this rascal some I warrant him! ods-bud; if I take him in hand, I'll play the devil with him.

Squ. Rich. Ay do, feyther, have him before the parliament.

Sir Fr. Ods-bud! and so I will—I will make him know who I am! where does he live?

J. Mood. I believe, in London, Sir.

Sir Fr. What's the rascal's name!

J. Mood. I think I heard somebody call him Dick.

Squ. Rich. What, my name!

Sir Fr. Where did he go?

J. Mood. Sir, he went home.

Sir Fr. Where's that?

J. Mood. By my troth, Sir, I doan't know: I heard him say he would cross the same street again to-morrow: and if we had a mind to stand in his way he wou'd pool us over and over again.

Sir Fr. Will he so! odszooks, get me a constable.

La. Wrong. Pooh! get you a good supper. Come, Sir Francis, don't put yourself in a heat for what can't be helpt. Accidents will happen to people that travel abroad to see the world—for my part, I think it's a mercy it was not over-turn'd before we were all out on't.

Sir Fr. Why, ay, that's true again, my dear.

La. Wrong. Therefore see to-morrow if we can buy one at second-hand, for present use; so bespeak a new one, and then all's easy.

J. Mood. Why troth, Sir, I doan't think this could have held you above a day longer.

Sir Fr. D'ye think so, John?

J. Mood. Why, you ha' had it even sen' your worship were high-sheriff.

Sir Fr. Why then, go and see what Doll has got us for supper—and come and get off my boots. [*Exit Sir Fr.*]

La. Wrong. In the mean time, Miss, do you step to Handy, and bid her get me some fresh night-cloaths. (*Exit La. Wrong.*)

Jenny. Yes, mamma, and some for myself too. [*Exit Jenny.*]

Squ. Rich. Odsflesh, and what mun I do all alone?

I'll e'en seek out where t'other pratty Miss is,

And she and I'll go play at cards for kisses.

[*Exit.*]

A C T III. S C E N E I.

S C E N E, *Lord Townly's House.*

Enter Lord Townly, a Servant attending.

L. Town. WHO's there?

Serv. My Lord!

L. Town. Bid them get dinner—Lady Grace, your servant.

Enter Lady Grace.

La. Grace. What, is the house up already? my Lady is not drest yet?

L. Town. No matter—it's three o'clock—she may break my rest, but she shall not alter my hours.

La. Grace. Nay, you need not fear that now, for she dines abroad.

L. Town. That, I suppose, is only an excuse for her not being ready yet.

La. Grace. No, upon my word, she is engag'd to company.

L. Town. Where, pray?

La. Grace. At my Lady Revel's; and you know they never dine 'till supper-time.

L. Town. No truly—she is one of those orderly Ladies, who never let the sun shine upon any of their vices!—but pry'thee, sister, what humour is she in to-day.

La. Grace. O! in tip-top spirits, I can assure you—she won a good deal, last night.

L. Town. I know no difference between her winning or losing, while she continues her course of life.

La. Grace. However she is better in good humour, than bad.

L. Town. Much alike. When she is in good humour, other people only are the better for it: when in a very ill humour, then, indeed, I seldom fail to have my share of her.

La. Grace. Well, we won't talk of that now—does any body dine here?

L. Town.

L. Town. Manly promis'd me—by the way, Madam, what do you think of his last conversation?

La. Grace. —I am a little at a stand about it.

L. Town. How so?

La. Grace. Why—I don't know how he can ever have any thoughts of me, that could lay down such severe rules upon wives, in my hearing.

L. Town. Did you think his rules unreasonable?

La. Grace. I can't say I did: but he might have had a little more complaisance before me, at least.

L. Town. Complaisance is only a proof of good breeding: but his plainness was a certain proof of his honesty; nay of his good opinion of you: for he would never have open'd himself so freely, but in confidence that your good sense could not be disoblig'd at it.

La. Grace. My good opinion of him, brother, has hitherto been guided by yours: but I have received a letter this morning, that shews him a very different man from what I thought him.

L. Town. A letter! from whom?

La. Grace. That I don't know, but there it is. (*Gives a Letter.*)

L. Town. Pray let's see.

[*Reads.*]

'The inclos'd, Madam, fell accidentally into my hands; if it no way concerns you, you will only have the trouble of reading this, from your sincere friend and humble servant, unknown, &c.

La. Grace. And this was the inclos'd. [*Gives another.*]

L. Town. (*Reads.*) To Charles Manly, Esq;

'Your manner of living with me of late, convinces me, that I now grow as painful to you as to myself: but however, though you can love me no longer, I hope you will not let me live worse than I did before I left an honest income, for the vain hopes of being ever yours. *Myrtilla Dupe.*

P. S. 'Tis above four months since I received a shilling from you.

L. Grace. What think you now?

L. Town. I am considering—

La. Grace. You see it is directed to him

L. Town. That's true! but the postscript seems to be a reproach, that I think he is not capable of deserving.

La. Grace. But who would have concern enough, to send it to me?

L. Town. I have observed that these sort of letters from unknown friends, generally come from secret enemies.

La. Grace. What would you have me do in it?

L. Town. What I think you ought to do—fairly shew it him, and say I advis'd you to it.

La. Grace. Will not that have a very odd look, from me?

L. Town. Not at all if you use my name in it: If he is innocent,

cent, his impatience to appear so, will discover his regard to you: if her is guilty, it will be you best way of preventing his addressess.

La. Grace. But what pretence have I to put him out of countenance?

L. Town. I can't think there's any fear of that.

La. Grace. Pray what is't you do think then?

L. Town. Why certainly, that it's much more probable, this letter may be all an artifice, than that he is in the least concern'd in it.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Mr. Manly, my Lord.

L. Town. Do you receive him; while I step a minute in to my Lady. *(Exit L. Town.)*

Enter Manly.

Man. Madam, your most obedient; they told me, my Lord was here.

L. Grace. He will be here presently: he is but just gone in to my sister.

Man. So, then my Lady dines with us.

La. Grace. No; she is engag'd.

Man. I hope you are not of her party, Madam.

La. Grace. Not 'till after dinner.

Man. And pray how may she have dispos'd of the rest of the day?

La. Grace. Much as usual! she has visits till about eight; after that, till court-time, she is to be at quadrille, at Mrs. Idle's: after the drawing-room, she takes a short supper with my Lady Moon-light. And from thence, they go together to my Lord Noble's assembly.

Man. And are you to do all this with her, Madam?

La. Grace. Only a few of the visits: I would indeed have drawn her to the play; but I doubt we have so much upon our hands, that 'twill not be practicable.

Man. But how can you forbear all the rest of it?

La. Grace. There's no great merit in forbearing, what one is not charm'd with.

Man. And yet I have found that very difficult, in my time.

La. Grace. How do you mean?

Man. Why I have pass'd a great deal of my life, in the hurry of the Ladies, though I was generally better pleas'd, when I was at quiet with 'em.

La. Grace. What induc'd you then, to be with them?

Man. Idleness, and the fashion,

La. Grace. No mistresses in the case?

Man. To speak honestly—yes—being often in the toyshop, there was no forbearing the bawbles.

La. Grace. And of course, I suppose, sometimes you were tempted to pay for them, twice as much as they were worth.

Man.

Man. Why really where fancy only makes the choice, Madam, no wonder if we are generally bubbled, in those sort of bargains; which I confess has been often my case: for I had constantly some coquet, or other, upon my hands, whom I could love perhaps just enough, to put it in her power to plague me.

La. Gr. And that's a power, I doubt, commonly made use of.

Man. The amours of a coquet, Madam, seldom have any other view: I look upon them, and prudes, to be nuisances, just alike; tho' they seem very different: the first are always plaguing the men; and the other are abusing the women.

La. Grace. And yet both of them do it for the same vain ends; to establish a false character of being virtuous.

Man. Of being chaste, they mean: for they know no other virtue; and, upon the credit of that, they traffick in every thing else, that's vicious: they (even against nature) keep their chastity, only because they find, they have more power to do mischief with it, than they could possibly put in practice without it.

La. Grace. Hold! Mr. Manly: I am afraid this severe opinion of the sex, is owing to the ill choice you have made of your mistresses.

Man. In a great measure, it may be so: but, Madam, if both these characters are so odious; how vastly valuable is that woman who has attain'd all they aim at, without the aid of the folly, or vice of either?

La. Grace. I believe those sort of women to be as scarce, Sir, as the men, that believe there are any such, or that allow such have virtue enough to deserve them.

Man. That *could* deserve them then—had been a more favourable reflection.

La. Grace. Nay, I speak only from my little experience: for (I'll be free with you, Mr. Manly) I don't know a man, in the world, that, in appearance, might better pretend to a woman of the first merit, than yourself: and yet I have a reason, in my hand, here, to think you have your failings.

Man. I have infinite, Madam; but I am sure, the want of an implicit respect for you, is not among the number—pray what is in your hand, Madam?

La. Grace. Nay, Sir, I have no title to it, for the direction is to you.

[Gives him a Letter.]

Man. To me! I don't remember the hand—[Reads to himself.]

La. Grace. I can't perceive any change of guilt in him! and his surprize seems natural. (*Aside.*—Give me leave to tell you one thing by the way, Mr. Manly; that I should never have shewn you this, but that my brother enjoin'd me to it.)

Man. I take that to proceed from my Lord's good opinion of me, Madam.

La. Grace.

La. Grace. I hope, at least, it will stand an excuse for my taking this liberty.

Man. I never yet saw you do any thing, Madam, that wanted an excuse; and, I hope, you will not give me an instance to the contrary, by refusing the favour I am going to ask you.

La. Grace. I don't believe I shall refuse any, that you think proper to ask.

Man. Only this, Madam, to indulge me so far, as to let me know, how this letter came into your hands?

La. Grace. Inclosed to me in this, without a name.

Man. If there be no secret in the contents, Madam——

La. Grace. Why—there is an impertinent insinuation in it; but as I know your good sense will think it so too, I will venture to trust you.

Man. You oblige me, Madam.

[*He takes the other Letter, and reads.*]

La. Grace. [*Aside.*] Now am I in the oddest situation! methinks our conversation grows terribly critical! this must produce something:—O lud! would it were over!

Man. Now, Madam, I begin to have some light into the poor project that is at the bottom of all this.

La. Grace. I have no notion of what could be propos'd by it.

Man. A little patience, Madam,—first, as to the insinuation you mention——

La. Grace. O! what is he going to say now! [*Aside.*]

Man. Tho' my intimacy with my Lord may have allow'd my visits to have been very frequent here, of late: yet, in such a talking town, as this, you must not wonder, if a great many of those visits are placed to your account; and this taken for granted, I suppose has been told to my Lady Wronghead, as a piece of news, since her arrival, not improbably without many more imaginary circumstances.

La. Grace. My Lady Wronghead!

Man. Ay, Madam, for I am positive this is her hand!

La. Grace. What view could she have in writing it?

Man. To interrupt any treaty of marriage, she may have heard I am engag'd in: because if I die without heirs, her family expects that some part of my estate may return to them again. But, I hope, she is so far mistaken, that if this letter has given you the least uneasiness,—I shall think that the happiest moment of my life.

La. Grace. That does not carry your usual complaisance, Mr. Manly!

Man. Yes, Madam, because I am sure I can convince you of my innocence.

La. Grace. I am sure, I have no right to enquire into it.

Man. Suppose you may not, Madam; yet you may very innocently have so much curiosity.

La. Grace.

La. Grace. With what an artful gentleness he steals into my opinion! [*Aside.*] Well, Sir, I won't pretend to have so little of the woman, in me, as to want curiosity—but pray, do you suppose then, this Myrtila is a real, or fictitious name?

Man. Now I recollect, Madam, there is a young woman in the house where my Lady Wronghead lodges, that I heard some body call Myrtila: this letter may be written by her—but how it came directed to me I confess is a mystery; that before I ever presume to see your Ladyship again, I think myself obliged in honour to find out. [*Going.*]

La. Grace. Mr. Manly—you are not going?

Man. 'Tis but to the next street, Madam; I shall be back in ten minutes.

La. Grace. Nay! but dinner's just coming up.

Man. Madam, I can neither eat, nor rest, 'till I see an end of this affair!

La. Grace. But this is so odd! why should any silly curiosity of mine drive you away?

Man. Since you won't suffer it to be yours, Madam; then it shall be only to satisfy my own curiosity——[*Exit Manly.*]

La. Grace. Well—and now, what am I to think of all this? Or, suppose an indifferent person had heard every word we have said to one another, what would they have thought on't? would it have been very absurd to conclude, he is seriously inclin'd to pass the rest of his life with me?—I hope not—for I am sure, the case is terribly clear on my side! and why may not I, without vanity, suppose my—unaccountable somewhat—has done as much execution upon him?—why—because he never told me so—nay, he has not so much as mention'd the word love, or ever said one civil thing to my person—well but he has said a thousand to my good opinion, and has certainly got it—had he spoke first to my person, he had paid a very ill compliment to my understanding—I should have thought him impertinent, and never have troubled my head about him, but as he has managed the matter, at least I am sure of one thing: that let his thoughts be what they will, I shall never trouble my head about any other man, as long as I live.

Enter Mrs. Trusty.

Well, Mrs. Trusty, is my sister dress'd yet?

Trusty. Yes, Madam; but my Lord has been courting her so, I think, 'till they are both out of humour.

La. Grace. How so?

Trusty. Why, it began, Madam, with his Lordship's desiring her Ladyship to dine at home to-day—upon which my Lady said she could not be ready; upon that, my Lord order'd them to stay the dinner, and then my Lady order'd the coach; then my Lord took her short, and said, he had order'd the coachman to set up: then my Lady made him a great court'sy,

court'sy, and said, she would wait 'till his Lordship's horses had din'd, and was mighty pleasant; but for fear of the worst Madam, she whisper'd me—to get her chair ready. [*Exit Truly.*]

La. Grace. Oh! here they come; and, by their looks, seems a little unfit for company. [*Exit La. Grace.*]

Enter La. Townly, L. Townly following.

La. Town. Well! look you, my Lord; I can bear it no longer! nothing still but about my faults; my faults! an agreeable subject truly!

L. Town. Why, Madam, if you won't hear of them, how can I ever hope to see you mend them?

La. Town. Why, I don't intend to mend them—I can't mend them—you know I have try'd to do it an hundred times, and — t hurts me so—I can't bear it!

L. Town. And I, Madam, can't bear this daily licentious abuse of your time and character.

La. Town. Abuse! astonishing! when the universe knows I am never better company, than when I am doing what I have a mind to: but see this world, that man can never get over that silly spirit of contradiction—why but lay Thursday now—there you wisely mended one of my faults, as you call them—you insisted upon my not going to the masquerade—and pray, what was the consequence? was not I as cross as the devil, all the night after? was not I forc'd to get company at home? and was it not almost three o'clock in the morning, before I was able to come to myself again? and then the fault is not mended neither—for next time, I shall only have twice the inclination to go: so that all this mending, and mending, you see, is but darning an old ruffle, to make it worse than it was before.

L. Town. Well, the manner of Women's living of late is insupportable: and one way or other—

La. Town. It's to be mended, I suppose; why so it may; but then, my dear Lord, you must give one time—and when things are at worst, you know, they may mend themselves, ha, ha!

L. Town. Madam, I am not in a humour, now, to trifle.

La. Town. Why then, my Lord, one word of fair argument—to talk with you, your own way now—you complain of my late hours, and I of your early ones—so far are we even, you'll allow—but pray which gives us the best figure, in the eye of the polite world? my active, spirited three in the morning, or your dull, drowsy eleven at night? now, I think, one has the air of a woman of quality, and t'other of a plodding mechanick, that goes to bed betimes, that he may rise early, to open his shop.—faugh!

L. Town. Fy, fy, Madam! is this your way of reasoning? 'tis time to wake you then—'tis not your ill hours alone, that disturb me, but as often the ill company, that occasion those ill hours,

La. Town.

La. Town. Sure I don't understand you now, my Lord ; what ill company do I keep ?

L. Town. Why, at best, women that lose their money, and men that win it! or, perhaps, men that are voluntary bubbles at one game, in hopes a Lady will give them fair play at another. Then that unavoidable mixture with known rakes, conceal'd thieves, and sharpers in embroidery—or what, to me, is still more shocking, that herd of familiar, chattering, crop-eared coxcombs, who are so often like monkeys, there would be no knowing them asunder, but that their tails hang from their head, and the monkey's grows where it should do.

La. Town. And a husband must give eminent proof of his sense, that thinks their powder-puffs dangerous.

L. Town. Their being fools, Madam, is not always the husband's security : or if it were, fortune sometimes, gives them advantages might make a thinking woman tremble.

La. Town. What do you mean ?

L. Town. That women, sometimes, lose more than they are able to pay ; and if a creditor be a little pressing, the Lady may be reduc'd, to try if instead of gold, the gentleman will accept of a trinket.

La. Town. My Lord, you grow scurrilous ; you'll make me hate you. I'll have you to know, I keep company with the politest people in town, and the assemblies I frequent are full of such.

L. Town. So are the churches—now and then.

La. Town. My friends frequent them too, as well as the assemblies.

L. Town. Yes, and would do it oftner, if a groom of the chambers there were allow'd to furnish cards to the company.

La. Town. I see what you drive at all this while: you would lay an imputation on my fame, to cover your own avarice! I might take any pleasures, I find, that were not expensive.

L. Town. Have a care, Madam ; don't let me think you only value your chastity, to make me reproachable for not indulging you in every thing else, that's vicious—I, Madam, have a reputation too, to guard, that's dear to me, as yours—The follies of an ungovern'd wife may make the wisest man uneasy ; but 'tis his own fault, if ever they make him contemptible.

La. Town. My Lord—you would make a woman mad !

L. Town. You'd make a man a fool.

La. Town. If heav'n hath made you otherwise, that won't be in my power.

L. Town. Whatever may be in your inclination, Madam ; I'll prevent your making me a beggar, at least.

La. Town. A beggar! Cræsus! I'm out of patience! I won't come home 'till four to morrow morning.

L. Town.

L. Town. That may be, Madam; but I'll order the door to be lock'd at twelve.

L. Town. Then I won't come home 'till to-morrow night.

L. Town. Then, Madam—you shall never come home again.

[Exit L. Town.]

La. Town. What does he mean! I never heard such a word from him in my life before! the man always us'd to have manners, in his worst humours! there's something, that I don't see, at the bottom of all this—but his head's always upon some impracticable scheme or other, so I won't trouble mine any longer about him. Mr. Manly, your Servant.

Enter Manly.

Man. I ask pardon for my intrusion, Madam; but I hope my business with my Lord will excuse it.

La. Town. I believe you'll find him in the next room, Sir.

Man. Will you give me leave, Madam?

La. Town. Sir—you have my leave tho' you were a Lady.

Man. (*Aside.*) What a well bred age do we live in?

[Exit Manly.]

Enter Lady Grace.

La. Town. O! my dear Lady Grace! how could you leave me so unmercifully alone, all this while?

La. Grace. I thought my Lord had been with you.

La. Town. Why, yes—and therefore I wanted your relief; for he has been in such a fluster here—

La. Grace. Bless me, for what?

La. Town. Only our usual breakfast; we have each of us had our dish of matrimonial comfort, this morning! we have been charming company!

La. Grace. I am mighty glad of it; sure it must be a vast happiness, when a man and a wife can give themselves the same turn of conversation!

La. Town. O, the prettiest thing in the world!

La. Grace. Now I should be afraid, that where two people are every day together so, they must often be in want of something to talk upon.

La. Town. O my dear, you are the most mistaken in the world, married people have things to talk of, child, that never enter into the imagination of others—why, here's my Lord and I now, we have not been married above two short years, you know, and we have already eight or ten things constantly in bank, that whenever we want company we can take up any one of them for two hours together, and the subject never the flatter: nay, if we have occasion for it, it will be as fresh next day too, as it was the first hour it entertain'd us.

La. Grace. Certainly, that must be vastly pretty!

La. Town. O, there's no life like it: why t'other day, for example, when you din'd abroad; my Lord and I, after a pretty

pretty chearful *tete a tete* meal, sat us down by the fire-side, in an easy, indolent, pick-tooth way, for about a quarter of an hour, as if we had not thought of one another's being in the room—at last stretching himself, and yawning—my dear, says he—aw—you came home very late, last night—'twas but just turn'd of two, says I—I was abed—aw—by eleven, says he; so you are every night, says I—well, says he, I am amaz'd you can sit up so late—how can you be amaz'd, says I, at a thing that happens so often?—upon which we enter'd into a conversation—and tho' this is a point has entertain'd us above fifty times already, we always find so many pretty new things to say upon it, that I believe, in my soul, it will last as long as we live!

La. Grace. But pray, in such sort of family dialogues (tho' extremely well, for passing the time) don't there now and then, enter some little witty sort of bitterness?

La. Town. O yes, which does not do amiss at all: a smart repartee, with a zest of recrimination at the head of it, makes the prettiest sherbet! ay, ay, if we did not mix a little of the acid with it, a matrimonial society would be so luscious, that nothing but an old liquorish prude would be able to bear it.

La. Grace. Well—certainly you have the most elegant taste—

La. Town. Tho' to tell you the truth, my dear, I rather think we squeez'd a little too much lemon into it, this bout; for it grew so sour at last, that—I think—I almost told him, he was a fool—and—he again—talk'd something odly of—turning me out of doors!

La. Grace. O, have a care of that!

La. Town. Nay, if he should, I may thank my own wise father for that—

La. Grace. How so?

La. Town. Why—when my good Lord first open'd his honourable trenches before me, my unaccountable papa, in whose hands I then was, gave up at discretion.

La. Grace. How do you mean?

La. Town. He said, the wives of this age were come to that pass, that he would not desire ev'n his own daughter should be trusted with pin-money; so that my whole train of separate inclinations are left entirely at the mercy of an husband's odd humours.

La. Grace. Why, that, indeed, is enough to make a woman of spirit look about her.

La. Town. Nay, but to be serious, my dear; what would you, really, have a woman do in my case?

La. Grace. Why—if I had as sober a husband as you have, I would make myself the happiest wife in the world, by being as sober as he.

E

La. Town.

La. Town. O, you wicked thing! how can you teize one, at this rate? when you know he is so very sober, that except giving me money) there is not one thing in the world he can do to please me: and I, at the same time, partly by nature and partly, perhaps, by keeping the best company, do with my soul love almost every thing he hates! I doat upon assemblies! my heart bounds at a ball, and at an opera—I expire? then I love play, to distraction! cards enchant me! and dice—put me out of my little wits! dear, dear hazard! oh, what a flow of spirits it gives one! do you never play at hazard, child?

La. Grace. Oh, never, I don't think it fits well upon women: there's something so masculine, so much the air of a rake in it: you see how it makes the men swear and curse; and when a woman is thrown into the same passion—why——

La. Town. That's very true, one is a little put to it, sometimes, not to make use of the same words to express it.

La. Grace. Well—and, upon ill luck, pray what words are you really forc'd to make use of?

La. Town. Why upon a very hard case, indeed, when a sad wrong word is rising just to one's tongue's end, I give a great gulp—and swallow it.

La. Grace. Well—and is not that enough to make you forswear play, as long as you live?

La. Town. O yes, I have forsworn it.

La. Grace. Seriously?

La. Town. Solemnly, a thousand times; but then one is constantly forsworn.

La. Grace. And how can you answer that?

La. Town. My dear, what we say, when we are losers, we look upon to be no more binding, than a lover's oath, or a great man's promise. But I beg pardon, child; I should not lead you so far into the world; you are a prude, and design to live soberly.

La. Grace. Why, I confess my nature, and my education do, in a good degree, incline me that way.

La. Town. Well, how a woman of spirit, (for you don't want that, child,) can dream of living soberly, is to me inconceivable, for you will marry, I suppose.

La. Grace. I can't tell but I may.

La. Town. And won't you live in town?

La. Grace. Half the year, I should like it very well.

La. Town. My stars! and you will really live in London half the year, to be sober in it?

La. Grace. Why not?

La. Town. Why can't you as well go and be sober in the country?

La. Grace. So I would—t'other half year.

La. Town.

La. Town. And pray, what comfortable scheme of life would you form now, for summer and winter sober entertainments?

La. Grace. A scheme, that I think might very well content us.

La. Town. O, of all things, let us hear it.

La. Grace. Why, in summer, I could pass my leisure hours in riding, soberly; in reading, walking by a canal, or sitting at the end of it under a great tree, soberly; in dressing, dining, chatting with an agreeable friend, perhaps hearing a little musick, taking a dish of tea; or a game at cards, soberly; managing my family, looking into its accounts, playing with my children (if I had any,) or in a thousand other innocent amusements—soberly: and possibly, by these means, I might induce my husband to be as sober as myself——

La. Town. Well, my dear, thou art an astonishing creature! for sure such primitive antediluvian notions of life have not been in any head these thousand years;—under a great tree; O my soul!—but I beg we may have the sober town-scheme too—for I am charm'd with the country one!——

La. Grace. You shall, and I'll try to stick to my sobriety there too.

La. Town. Well, tho' I am sure it will give me the vapours, I must hear it however.

La. Grace. Why then, for fear of your fainting, Madam, I will first so far come into the fashion, that I would never be dress'd out of it—but still it should be soberly. For I can't think it any disgrace, to a woman of my private fortune, not to wear her lace as fine as the wedding-suit of a first dutchess. Tho' there is one extravagance I would venture to come up to.

La. Town. Ay, now for it——

La. Grace. I would every day be as clean, as a bride.

La. Town. Why, the men say, that's a great step to be made one—well now you are dress'd—pray let's see to what purpose?

La. Grace. I would visit—soberly—that is, my real friends; but as little for form as possible.—I would go to court; sometimes to an assembly, nay play at Quadrille—soberly: I would see all the good plays; and, (because 'tis the fashion) now and then an opera,—but still soberly; I would not expire there, for fear I should never go again: and lastly, I can't say, but for curiosity, if I liked my company, I might be drawn in once to a masquerade; and this I think, is as far as any woman can go—soberly.

La. Town. Well, if it had not been for that last piece of sobriety, I was just going to call for some surfeit water.

La. Grace. Why, don't you think, with the farther aid of breakfasting, dining, taking the air, supping, sleeping, not to say a word of devotion, the four and twenty hours might roll over in a tolerable manner?

La. Town. Tolerable? deplorable! why, child, all yod propose; is but to endure life; now I want to enjoy it——

Enter Mrs. Trusty,

Truf. Madam, your ladyship's chair is ready.

La. Town. Have the footmen their white flambeaux yet? for last night I was poison'd.

Truf. Yes, Madam; there were some come in this morning,
(*Ex. Trusty.*)

La. Town. My dear, you will excuse me; but you know my time is so precious——

La. Grace. That I beg I may not hinder your least enjoyment of it.

La. Town. You will call on me at lady Revel's?

La. Grace. Certainly.

La. Town. But I am so afraid it will break into your scheme, my dear!

La. Grace. When it does, I will—soberly break from you.

La. Town. Why then, 'till we meet again, dear sister, I wish you all tolerable happiness.
(*Ex. La. Town.*)

La. Grace. There she goes—dash! into her stream of pleasure! poor woman, she is really a fine creature, and sometimes infinitely agreeable; nay, take her out of the madness of this town, rational in her notions, and easy to live with; but she is so borne down by this torrent of vanity in vogue, she thinks every hour of her life is lost that she does not lead at the head of it. What it will end in, I tremble to imagine—ha! my brother, and Manly with him! I guess what they have been talking of—I shall hear it in my turn, I suppose, but it won't become me to be inquisitive.
(*Ex. La. Grace.*)

Enter Lord Townly and Manly.

L. Town. I did not think my lady Wronghead had such a notable brain; tho' I can't say she was so very wise, in trusting this silly girl, you call Myrtila, with the secret.

Man. No, my Lord, you mistake me; had the girl been in the secret, perhaps I had never come at it myself.

L. Town. Why I thought you said the girl writ this letter to you, and that my Lady Wronghead sent it inclos'd to my sister?

Man. If you please to give me leave, my Lord,—the fact is thus—this inclos'd letter to Lady Grace was a real original one, written by this girl, to the Count we have been talking of: the Count drops it, and my Lady Wronghead finds it: then only changing the cover, she seals it up as a letter of business, just written by herself, to me: and pretending to be in a hurry, gets this innocent girl to write the direction for her.

L. Town. Oh! then the girl did not know she was superscribing a billet-doux of her own, to you?

Man. No, my Lord; for when I first question'd her about the

the direction, she own'd it immediately: but when I shew'd her, that her letter to the Count was within it, and told her how it came into my hands, the poor creature was amaz'd, and thought herself betray'd both by the Count and my Lady—in short, upon this discovery, the girl and I grew so gracious, that she has let me into some transactions, in my Lady Wronghead's family, which, with my having a careful eye over them, may prevent the ruin of it.

L. Town. You are very generous to be so solicitous for a lady, that has given you so much uneasiness.

Man. But I will be most unmercifully reveng'd of her: for I will do her the greatest friendship in the world—against her will.

L. Town. What an uncommon philosophy art thou master of? to make even thy malice a virtue!

Man. Yet, my Lord, I assure you, there is no one action of my life gives me more pleasure, than your approbation of it.

L. Town. Dear Charles! my heart's impatient, 'till thou art nearer to me: and as a proof that I have long wish'd thee so, while your daily conduct has chosen rather to deserve, than ask my sister's favour; I have been as secretly industrious to make her sensible of your merit: And since on this occasion you have open'd your whole heart to me, 'tis now with equal pleasure, I assure you, we have both succeeded—she is as firmly yours——

Man. Impossible! you flatter me!

L. Town. I'm glad you think it flattery: but she herself shall prove it none: she dines with us alone: when the servants are withdrawn, I'll open a conversation, that shall excuse my leaving you together—O! Charles! had I, like thee, been cautious in my choice, what melancholy hours had this heart avoided!

Man. No more of that, I beg, my Lord——

L. Town. But 'twill, at least, be some relief to my anxiety (however barren of content the state has been to me) to see so near a friend and sister happy, in it; Your harmony of life will be an instance how much the choice of temper's preferable to beauty.

While your soft hours in mutual kindness move,

You'll reach, by virtue, what I lost by love. [Exeunt.

A C T IV. S C E N E I.

S C E N E, *Mrs. Motherly's House.*

Enter Mrs. Motherly, meeting Myrtille.

Myr. **S**O, niece, where is it possible you can have been these six hours?

Myr. O Madam! I have such a terrible story to tell you!

Moth. A story! Ods my life, what have you done with the Count's note of five hundred pounds I sent you about? is it safe? is it good? is it security?

Myr. Yes, yes, it is safe: But for its goodness—Mercy on us! I have been in a fair way of being hang'd about it.

Moth. The dickens! has this rogue of a Count play'd us another trick then?

Myr. You shall hear, Madam; when I came to Mr. Cash the banker's, and shew'd him his note for five hundred pounds payable to the Count, or order, in two months—he look'd earnestly upon it, and desired me to step into the inner room, while he examin'd his books—after I had staid about ten minutes, he came in to me—claps to the door, and charges me with a constable for forgery.

Moth. Ah! poor soul! and how didst thou get off?

Myr. While I was ready to sink in this condition, I begg'd him to have a little patience, 'till I could send for Mr. Manly, whom he knew to be a gentleman of worth and honour, and who, I was sure, would convince him, whatever fraud might be in the note, that I was myself an innocent, abus'd woman—and as good luck would have it, in less than half an hour Mr. Manly came—so without mincing the matter, I fairly told him upon what design the Count had lodg'd that note in your hands, and in short, laid open the whole scheme he had drawn us into, to make our fortune.

Moth. The devil you did!

Myr. Why how do you think it was possible I could any otherways make Mr. Manly my friend, to help me out of the scrape I was in? To conclude, he soon made Mr. Cash easy, and sent away the constable; nay farther promis'd me, if I could trust the note in his hands, he would take care it should be fully paid before it was due, and at the same time would give me an ample revenge upon the Count; so that all you have to consider now, Madam, is whether you think yourself safer in the Count's hands, or Mr. Manly's?

Moth. Nay, nay, child; there is no choice in the matter! Mr. Manly may be a friend indeed, if any thing in our power can make him so.

Myr. Well, Madam, and now pray, how stand matters at home here? What has the Count done with the ladies?

Moth. Why every thing he has a mind to do, by this time, I suppose. He is in as high favour with Miss, as he is with my Lady.

Myr. Pray, where are the Ladies?

Moth. Rattling abroad in their own coach, and the well-bred Count along with them. They have been scouring all the shops in town over, buying fine things and new cloaths, from morning

morning to night. They have made one voyage already, and have brought home such a cargo of bawbles and trumpery—Mercy on the poor man that's to pay for them!

Myr. Did not the young Squire go with them?

Moth. No, no; Miss said, truly he would but disgrace their party, so they even left him asleep by the kitchen fire.

Myr. Has not he ask'd after me all this while? For I had a sort of an assignation with him.

Moth. O yes, he has been in a bitter taking about it. At last his disappointment grew so uneasy, that he fairly fell a crying; so to quiet him, I sent one of the maids and John Moody abroad with him, to shew him—the Lyons, and the monument. Ods me, here he is, just come home again—you may have business with him—so I'll even leave you together.

Enter Squire Richard.

Squ. Rich. Soah, soah, Mrs. Myrtilia, wheere han yow been aw this day, forsooth?

Myr. Nay, if you go to that, Squire, where have you been, pray?

Squ. Rich. Why, when I funt 'at yow were no loikly to come whoam, I were ready to hong my sal—so John Moody, and I, and one o' your lassies have been—Lord knows wheere—a seeing o'foights.

Myr. Well, and pray what have you seen, Sir?

Squ. Rich. Flesh, I cawn't tell, not I—seen every thing, I think. First there we went to o' top o' the what'd'ye call it? there, the great huge stone*post, up the rawnd and rawnd stairs, that twine and twine about, just as an thof it were a cork-scrue.

Myr. O, the monument; well, and was not it a fine sight, from the top of it?

Squ. Rich. Sight, Miss! I know no'—I saw nowght but smoak and brick housen, and steeple tops—then there was such a mortal ting tang of bells, and rumbling of carts and coaches, and then the folks under one look'd so small, and made such a hum, and a buz, it put me in mind of my mother's great glass bee-hive, in our garden in the country.

Myr. I think, Master, you give a very good account of it.

Squ. Rich. Ay! but did no' like it: For my head—my head—began to turn—so I trundled me dawn stairs agen, like a round trencher.

Myr. Well! but this was not all you saw, I suppose?

Squ. Rich. Noa! noa! we went after that, and saw the Lyons; and I lik'd them better by hawlf; they are pure grim devils; hoh, hoh! I touk a stick, and gave one of them such a poke o' the noase—I believe he would ha' snapt my head off, an he could ha' got me. Hoh! hoh! hoh!

Myr. Well, Master, when you and I go abroad, I'll shew you prettier fights than these—there's a masquerade to-morrow.

Squ.

Squ. Rich. O Laud! ay! they say that's a pure thing for Merry Andrews, and those sort of comical mummers—and the Count tells me, that there lads and lasses may jig their tails, and eat, and drink without grudging, all night lung.

Myr. What would you say now, if I should get you a tick-et, and go along with you?

Squ. Rich. Ah dear!

Myr. But have a care, Squire, the fine ladies there are terribly tempting; look well to your heart, or ads me! they'll whip it up in the trip of a minute.

Squ. Rich. Ay, but they cawnt thoa—foa let 'um look to themselves, an' ony of 'um falls in love with me—mayhap they had as good be quiet.

Myr. Why sure you would not refuse a fine lady, would you?

Squ. Rich. Ay, but I would tho' unless it were—one 'at I know of.

Myr. Oh! ho! then you have left your heart in the country, I find?

Squ. Rich. Noa, noa, my heart—eli—my heart eent awt o' this room.

Myr. I am glad you have it about you, however.

Squ. Rich. Nay, mayhap not foa, noather, some body else may have it, 'at you little think of.

Myr. I can't imagine what you mean.

Squ. Rich. Noa! why doan't you know how many folke there is in this room, naw?

Myr. Very fine, Master, I see you have learnt the town gallantry already.

Squ. Rich. Why doan't you believe 'at I have a kindness for you, then?

Myr. Fy! fy! Master, how you talk! besides you are too young to think of a wife.

Squ. Rich. Ay! but I caunt help thinking o' yow, for all that.

Myr. How, why sure, Sir, you don't pretend to think of me in a dishonourable way?

Squ. Rich. Nay, that's as yow see good—I did no' think 'at yow you'd ha' thought of me for a husband, mayhap; unless I had means, in my own hands; and feyther allows me but half a crown a week, as yet a while.

Myr. Oh! when I like any body, 'tis not want of money will make me refuse them.

Squ. Rich. Well, that's just my mind now; for 'an I like a girl, Miss, I would take her in her smuck.

Myr. Ay, Master, now you speak like a man of honour: This shews something of a true heart in you.

Squ. Rich. Ay, and a true heart you'll find me; try when you will.

Myr. Hush! hush; here's your papa come home, and my
Squ.

Squ. Rich. A devil rive them, what do they come now for?

Myr. When you and I get to the masquerade, you shall see what I'll say to you.

Squ. Rich. Well, hands upon't then——

Myr. There——

Squ. Rich. One bufs and a bargain. [*Kisses her.*] Ads wauntlikins! as soft and plump as a marrow-pudding. [*Ex. severally.*]

Enter Sir Francis Wronghead and Mrs. Motherly.

Sir Fr. What! my wife and daughter abroad, say you?

Moth. O dear Sir, they have been mighty busy all the day long, they just came home to snap up a short dinner, and so went out again.

Sir Fr. Well, well, I shan't stay supper for 'em, I can tell 'em that: For ods-heart! I have had nothing in me, but a toast and tankard, since morning.

Moth. I am afraid, Sir, these late Parliament hours won't agree with you.

Sir Fr. Why, truly, Mrs. Motherly, they don't do right with us country gentlemen; to lose one meal out of three, is a hard task upon a good stomach.

Moth. It is so indeed, Sir.

Sir Fr. But, hawsomever, Mrs. Motherly, when we consider, that what we suffer is for the good of our country——

Moth. Why truly, Sir, that is something.

Sir Fr. Oh! there is a great deal to be said for't—the good of one's country is above all things—A true-hearted Englishman thinks nothing too much for it—I have heard of some honest gentlemen so very zealous, that for the good of their country—they would sometimes go to dinner at midnight.

Moth. Oh! the goodness of 'em! sure their country must have a vast esteem for them?

Sir Fr. So they have, Mrs. Motherly; they are so respected when they come home to their boroughs, after a session, and so belov'd—that their country will come and dine with them every day of the week.

Moth. Dear me! what a fine thing 'tis to be so populous!

Sir Fr. It is a great comfort, indeed! and I can assure you, you are a good sensible woman, Mrs. Motherly.

Moth. O dear Sir, your honour's pleas'd to compliment.

Sir Fr. No, no, I see you know how to value people of consequence.

Moth. Good lack! here's company, Sir; will you give me leave to get you a broil'd bone, or so, 'till the ladies come home, Sir?

Sir Fr. Why troth, I don't think it would be amiss.

Moth. It shall be done in a moment, Sir.

[*Exit.*]

Enter Manly.

Man. Sir Francis, your servant.

Sir Fr. Cousin Manly!

Man.

Man. I am come to see how the family goes on here.

Sir Fr. Troth, all as busy as bees; I have been upon the wing ever since eight o'clock this morning.

Man. By your early hour, then, I suppose you have been making your court to some of the great men.

Sir Fr. Why, faith, you have hit it, Sir—I was advis'd to lose no time: So I e'en went straight forward to one great man I had never seen in my life before.

Man. Right, that was doing business. But who had you got to introduce you?

Sir Fr. Why nobody—I remember'd I heard a wife man say—My son, be bold—so troth, I introduced myself.

Man. As how pray?

Sir Fr. Why, thus—Look ye—Please your lordship, says I, I am Sir Francis Wronghead of Bumper-Hall, and member of parliament for the borough of Guzzledown—Sir, your humble servant, says my Lord; tho' I have not the honour to know your person, I have heard you are a very honest gentleman, and I am glad your borough have made choice of so worthy a representative; and so, says he, Sir Francis, have you any service to command me? Naw, cousin, those last words, you may be sure, gave me no small encouragement. And tho' I know, Sir, you have no extraordinary opinion of my parts, yet, I believe, you won't say I mist it naw!

Man. Well, I hope I shall have no cause.

Sir Fr. So, when I found him so courteous—My Lord, says I, I did not think to ha' troubled your lordship with business upon my first visit; but since your lordship is pleas'd not to stand upon ceremony—why truly, says I, I think naw is as good as another time.

Man. Right, there you push'd him home.

Sir Fr. Ay, ay, I had a mind to let him see that I was none of your mealy-mouth'd ones.

Man. Very good.

Sir Fr. So, in short, my Lord, says I, I have a good estate—but—a—it's a leetle awt at elbows; and as I desire to serve my King, as well as my Country, I shall be very willing to accept of a place at court.

Man. So, this was making short work on't.

Sir Fr. I'cod, I shot him flying, cousin: Some of your half-witted ones naw, would ha' humm'd and haw'd, and dangled a month or two after him, before they durst open their mouths about a place, and mayhap, not ha' got it at last neither—

Man. Oh, I'm glad you're so sure on't—

Sir Fr. You shall hear, cousin—Sir Francis, says my Lord, pray what sort of a place may you ha' turn'd your thoughts upon? My Lord, says I, beggars must not be chusers; but ony place, says I, about a thousand a year will be well enough to

be doing with 'till something better falls in—for I thought it would not look well to stand haggling with him at first.

Man. No, no, your business was to get footing any way.

Sir Fr. Right, there's it! ah, cousin, I see you know the world.

Man. Yes; yes, one sees more of it every day—well, but what says my Lord to all this?

Sir Fr. Sir Francis, says he, I shall be glad to serve you any way, that lies in my power; so he gave me a squeeze by the hand, as much as to say, give yourself no trouble—I'll do your business; with that he turn'd him abawt to somebody, with a colour'd ribbon a-cross here, that look'd in my thoughts, as if he came for a place too.

Man. Ha! so upon these hopes you are to make your fortune.

Sir Fr. Why, do you think there's any doubt of it, Sir?

Man. Oh no, I have not the least doubt about it—for just as you have done, I made my fortune ten years ago.

Sir Fr. Why I never knew you had a place, cousin.

Man. Nor I, neither, upon my faith, cousin. But you, perhaps, may have better fortune: For, I suppose, my Lord has heard of what importance you were in the debate to-day—You have been since down at the house, I presume.

Sir Fr. O yes, I would not neglect the house, for ever so much.

Man. Well, and pray what have they done there?

Sir Fr. Why, troth, I can't well tell you what they have done, but I can tell you what I did: and I think pretty well in the main; only I happened to make a little mistake at last, indeed.

Man. How was that?

Sir Fr. Why, they were all got there, in a sort of a puzzling debate, about the good of the nation—and I were always for that, you know—but, in short, the arguments were so long-winded o'both sides, that, waunds, I did not well understand 'um: Hawfomever, I was convinc'd, and so resolved to vote right, according to my conscience—so, when they came to put the question, as they call it—I don't know how 'twas—but I doubt I cry'd Ay, when I should ha' cry'd No.

Man. How came that about?

Sir Fr. Why, by a mistake, as I tell you—for there was a good-humour'd sort of a gentleman, one Mr. Totherside I think they call him, that sat next me, as soon as I had cry'd No, gives me a hearty shake by the hand; Sir, says he, you are a man of honour, and a true Englishman, and I should be proud to be better acquainted with you—and so with that he takes me by the sleeve, along with the crowd, into the lobby—so I knew nowght—but odds-flesh, I was got o' th' wrong side the post—for I were told afterwards, I should have staid where I was.

Man. And so, if you had not quite made your fortune before,

fore, you have clinched it now—ah, thou Head of the Wrong-heads!

Sir Fr. Odso, here's my Lady come home at last—I hope, cousin, you will be so kind as to take a family supper with us? [*Aside.*]

Man. Another time, Sir Francis; but to-night I am engag'd.

Enter Lady Wronghead, Miss Jenny and Count Basset.

La. Wrong. Cousin, your servant; I hope you will pardon my rudeness: but we have really been in such a continual hurry here, that we have not had a leisure moment to return your last visit.

Man. O Madam, I am a man of no ceremony; you see that has not hinder'd my coming again.

La. Wrong. You are infinitely obliging: but I'll redeem my credit with you.

Man. At your own time, Madam.

C. Bas. I must say that for Mr. Manly, Madam; if making people easy is the rules of good-breeding, he is certainly the best bred man in the world.

Man. Soh! I am not to drop my acquaintance, I find—
(*Aside.*) I am afraid, Sir, I shall grow vain upon your good opinion.

C. Bas. I don't know that, Sir; but I am sure, what you are pleas'd to say, makes me so.

Man. The most impudent modesty that ever I met with. [*Aside.*]

La. Wrong. Lard! how ready his wit is? [*Aside.*]

Sir Fr. Don't you think, Sir, the Count's a very fine gentleman. [*Apart.*]

Man. O! among the ladies, certainly. [*Apart.*]

Sir Fr. And yet he's as stout as a lion: wound, he'll storm any thing. [*Apart.*]

Man. Will he so? why then, Sir, take care of your citadel. [*Apart.*]

Sir Fr. Ah! you are a wag, cousin. [*Apart.*]

Man. I hope, ladies, the town air continues to agree with you?

Jenny. O, perfectly well, Sir! we have been abroad in our new coach all day long—and we have bought an ocean of fine things. And to-morrow we go to the masquerade, and on Friday to the play, and on Saturday to the opera, and on Sunday we are to be at the whatd'ye call it—assembly, and see the ladies play at quadrille, and picquet, and ombre, and hazard, and ballet! and on Monday we are to see the king! and on Tuesday—

La. Wrong. Hold, hold, Miss, you must not let your tongue run on so fast, child—you forget, you know I brought you hither to learn modesty.

Man. Yes, yes, and she is improv'd with a vengeance— [*Aside.*]

Jenny. Lawrd, Madam, I am sure I did not say any harm! and, if one must not speak in one's turn, one may be kept under as long as one lives, for aught I see. La.

La. Wrong. O' my conscience, this girl grows so head-strong—
Sir Fr. Ay, ay, there's your fine growing spirit for you! now take it down, an' you can.

Jen. All I said, Papa, was only to entertain my cousin Manly.

Man. My pretty dear, I am mightily oblig'd to you.

Jenny. Look you there now, Madam.

La. Wrong. Hold your tongue, I say.

Jenny. [Turning away and glowing.] I declare it, I won't bear it: She is always a snubbing me before you, Sir,—I know why she does it, well enough— [Aside to the Count.

C. Bas. Hush, hush, my dear; don't be uneasy at that, she'll suspect us. [Aside.

Jenny. Let her suspect, what do I care—I don't know but I have as much reason to suspect, as she—tho' perhaps I'm not so afraid of her.

C. Bas. [Aside.] I'gad, if I don't keep a tight hand on my tit, here, she'll run away with my project before I can bring it to bear.

La. Wrong. [Aside.] Perpetually hanging upon him! The young harlot is certainly in love with him: But I must not let them see I think so—and yet I can't bear it. Upon my life, Count, you'll spoil that forward girl—you should not encourage her so.

C. Bas. Pardon me, Madam, I was only advising her to observe what your Ladyship said to her.

Man. Yes, truly her observations have been something particular. [Aside.

C. Bas. In one word, Madam, she has a jealousy of your Ladyship, and I am forc'd to encourage her to blind it: 'Twill be better to take no notice of her behaviour to me. [Apart.

La. Wrong. You are right, I will be more cautious. [Apart.

C. Bas. To-morrow at the Masquerade, we may lose her. [Apart.

La. Wrong. We shall be observ'd, I'll send you a note, and settle that affair—go on with the girl, and don't mind me. [Apart.

C. Bas. I have been taking your part, my little angel.

La. Wrong. Jenny, come hither, child—you must not be so hasty, my dear, I only advise you for your good.

Jenny. Yes, Mama; but when I am told of a thing before company, it always makes me worse, you know.

Man. If I have any skill in the fair sex, Miss, and her Mama, have only quarell'd, because they are both of a mind. This facetious Count seems to have made a very genteel step into the family. [Aside.

Enter Myrilla. Manly talks apart with her.

La. Wrong. Well, Sir Francis, and what news have you brought us from Westminster, to-day?

Sir Fr. News, Madam? I'cod, I have some—and such as does not come every day, I can tell you—a word in your ear
F —I have

—I have got a promise of a place at court of a thousand pawnd a year, already.

La. Wrong. Have you so, Sir? And pray who may you thank for it? Now, who's in the right? Is not this better than throwing so much away, after a stinking pack of fox-hounds, in the country? Now your family may be the better for it.

Sir Fr. Nay, that's what persuaded me to come up, my dove.

La. Wrong. Mightily well—come—let me have another hundred pound then.

Sir Fr. Another, child? Waunds, you have had one hundred this morning, pray what's become of that, my dear?

La. Wrong. What's become of it? why, I'll shew you, my love: Jenny, have you the bills about you?

Jenny. Yes, Mama.

La. Wrong. What's become of it? why, laid out, my dear, with fifty more to it, that I was forc'd to borrow of the Count here.

Jenny. Yes, indeed, Papa, and that would hardly do neither—There's the account.

Sir Fr. [*Turning over the bills.*] Let's see! let's see! what the devil have we got here?

Man. Then you have sounded your Aunt, you say, and she readily comes into all I propos'd to you? [*Apart.*]

Myr. Sir, I'll answer with my life she is most thankfully yours in every article: She mightily desires to see you, Sir. [*Apart.*]

Man: I am going home, directly: Bring her to my house in half an hour; and if she makes good what you tell me, you shall both find your account in it. [*Apart.*]

Myr. Sir, she shall not fail you. [*Apart.*]

Sir Fr. Ods-life! Madam, here's nothing but toys, and trinkets, and fans, and clock-sockings, by wholesale!

La. Wrong. There's nothing but what's proper, and for your credit, Sir Francis—Nay, you see I am so good a housewife, that in necessaries for myself, I have scarce laid out a shilling.

Sir Fr. No by my troth, so it seems; for the devil o' one thing's here, that I can see you have any occasion for.

La. Wrong. My dear, do you think I came hither to live out of the fashion? why the greatest distinction of a fine Lady in this town is in the variety of pretty things that she has no occasion for.

Jenny. Sure, Papa, could you imagine, that women of quality wanted nothing but stays and petticoats?

La. Wrong. Now, that is so like him.

Man. So, the family comes on finely. [*Aside.*]

La. Wrong. Lard, if men were always to govern, what dowdies would they reduce their wives to?

Sir Fr. An hundred pounds in the morning, and want another afore night? Waunds and fire, the Lord-Mayor of London could not hold it, at this rate!

Man.

Man. O! do you feel it! Sir? [Aside.

La. Wrong. My dear, you seem uneasy; let me have the hundred pound, and compose yourself.

Sir Fr. Compose the devil, Madam! why, do you consider, what a hundred pound a day comes to in a year?

La. Wrong. My life, if I account with you from one day to another, that's really all my head is able to bear at a time—But I'll tell you what I consider—I consider, that my advice has got you a thousand pound a year this morning—That now, methinks you might consider, Sir.

Sir Fr. A thousand a year! Waunds, Madam, but I have not touch'd a penny of it yet.

Man. Nor never will, I'll answer for him. [Aside.

Enter Squire Richard.

Squ. Rich. Feyther, and yow doan't come quickly, the meat will be coald; and I'd fain pick a bit with you.

La. Wrong. Bless me, Sir Francis; you are not going to sup by yourself?

Sir Fr. No, but I'm going to dine by myself, and that's pretty near the matter, Madam.

La. Wrong. Had not you as good stay a little, my dear? We shall all eat in half an hour; and I was thinking to ask my cousin Manly to take a family morfel with us.

Sir Fr. Nay, for my Cousin's good company, I don't care if I ride a day's journey without baiting.

Man. By no means, Sir Francis. I am going upon a little business.

Sir Fr. Well, Sir, I know you don't love compliments.

Man. You'll excuse me, Madam—

La. Wrong. Since you have business, Sir— [Ex. Manly.

Enter Mrs. Motherly.

O, Mrs. Motherly! you were saying this morning, you had some very fine Lace to shew me—can't I see it now? [Sir Fran. stares.

Moth. Why, really Madam, I had made a sort of a promise to let the countess of Nicely have the first sight of it, for the birth-day: But your Ladyship—

La. Wrong. O! I die, if I don't see it before her.

Squ. Rich. Woan't you goa, Feyther? [Apart.

Sir Fr. Waunds, Lad, I shall have noa stomach at this rate? [Apart.

Moth. Well, Madam, though I say it, 'tis the sweetest pattern, that ever came over—and for fineness—no cobweb comes up to it!

Sir Fr. Ods guts and gizards, Madam! Laces as fine as a cobweb! why, what the devil's that to cost now?

Moth. Nay, if Sir Francis does not like it, Madam—

La. Wrong. He like it! Dear Mrs. Motherly, he is not to wear it.

Sir Fr. Flesh, Madam, but, I suppose, I am to pay for it.

La. Wrong. No doubt on't! Think of your thousand a year,

and who got it you; go eat your dinner, and be thankful, go.
[*driving him to the door.*] Come, Mrs. Motherly.

[*Exit Lady Wronghead, with Mrs. Motherly.*]

Sir Fr. Very fine! so, here I mun fast, 'till I am almost famish'd for the good of my country; while Madam is laying me out an hundred pound a day in lace, as fine as a cobweb, for the honour of my family! Ods flesh, things had need go well, at this rate!

Squ. Rich. Nay, nay—come, Feyther. [*Exit Sir Francis. Enter Mrs. Motherly.*]

Moth. Madam, my Lady desires you and the Count will please to come and assist her fancy in some of the new laces.

C. Bas. We'll wait upon her—— [*Exit Mrs. Motherly.*]

Jenny. So, I told you how it was! you see she can't bear to leave us together.

C. Bas. No matter, my dear: You know she has ask'd me to stay to supper: So, when your Papa and she are abed, Mrs. Myrtilla will let me into the house again; then you may steal into her chamber, and we'll have a pretty little sneaker of punch together.

Myr. Ay, ay, Madam, you may command me any thing.

Jenny. Well, that will be pure!

C. Bas. But you had best go to her alone, my life: it will look better if I come after you.

Jenny. Ay, so it will: and to-morrow, you know, at the masquerade. And then—hey! O! *I'll have a husband and marry.* [*Exit singing.*]

Myr. So, Sir! am not I very commode to you?

C. Bas. Well, child, and don't you find your account in it! Did not I tell you we might still be of use to one another?

Myr. Well, but how stands your affair with Miss, in the main?

C. Bas. O she's mad for the masquerade: it drives like a nail, we want nothing now but a parson, to clinch it. Did not your Aunt say she could get one at a short warning?

Myr. Yes, yes, my lord Townly's chaplain is her Cousin you know; he'll do her business and mine at the same time.

C. Bas. O, it's true! but where shall we appoint him?

Myr. Why, you know my lady Townly's house is always open to the masques upon a ball-night, before they go to the Hay-market.

C. Bas. Good.

Myr. Now the doctor proposes, we shall all come thither in our habits, and when the rooms are full, we may steal up into his chamber, he says, and there—crack—he'll give us all a canonical commission to go to bed together.

C. Bas. Admirable! Well, the devil fetch me if I should not be heartily glad to see thee well settled, child.

Myr. And may the black gentleman tuck me under his arm
at

at the same time, if I shall not think myself oblig'd to you, as long as I live.

C. Bas. One kiss, for old acquaintance sake—I'gad, I shall want to be busy again.

Myr. O you'll have one shortly that will find you employment: But I must run to my Squire.

C. Bas. And I to the ladies—so, your humble servant, sweet Mrs. Wronghead.

Myr. Yours, as in duty bound, most noble Count Basset.

[Exit Myrtilla.]

C. Bas. Why, ay! Count, that title has been of some use to me, indeed! not that I have any more pretence to it, than I have to a blue ribband. Yet, I have made a pretty considerable figure in life with it: I have loll'd in my own chariot, dealt at assemblies, din'd with ambassadors, and made one at quadrille with the first women of quality—But—*Tempora mutantur*—since that damn'd squadron at White's have left me out of their last secret, I am reduced to trade upon my own stock of industry, and make my last push upon a wife: If my card comes up right (which, I think, can't fail) I shall once more cut a figure, and cock my hat in the face of the best of them! For since our modern men of quality are grown wife enough to be sharpers; I think sharpers are fools, that don't take up the airs of men of quality.

A C T V. S C E N E I.

S C E N E, *Lord Townly's House.*

Enter Manly and Lady Grace.

Man. **T**HERE's something, Madam, hangs upon your mind to-day.

La. Grace. Since you will know it—my sister then—unhappy woman!

Man. What of her?

La. Grace. Fear is on the brink of ruin!

Man. I am sorry for it—what has happened?

La. Grace. Nothing so very new, but the continual repetition of it, at last, has rous'd my brother to an intemperance, that I tremble at.

Man. Have they had any words upon it?

La. Grace. He has not seen her since yesterday.

Man. What! not at home all night.

La. Grace. About five this morning, in she came, but with such looks, and such an equipage of misfortunes, at her heels—What can become of her?

Man. Has not my Lord seen her, say you?

La. Grace. Not he chang'd his bed last night—I sat with him.

him alone 'till twelve, in expectation of her: But, when the clock struck, he started from his chair, and grew incens'd to that degree, that had I not, almost on my knees, dissuaded him, he had order'd the doors, that instant, to have been lock'd against her.

Man. How terrible is his situation? when the most justifiable severities he can use against her, are liable to be the mirth of all the dissolute card-tables in town.

La. Grace. 'Tis that, I know, has made him bear so long? But you, that feel for him, Mr. Manly, will assist him to support his honour, and, if possible, preserve his quiet! therefore, I beg you don't leave the house, 'till one, or both of them be wrought to better temper.

Man. How amiable is this concern, in you?

La. Grace. For heaven's sake, don't mind me, but think on something to preserve us all.

Man. I shall not take the merit of obeying your commands, Madam, to serve my Lord—but pray, Madam, let me into all that has pass since yester night.

La. Grace. When my intreaties had prevail'd upon my Lord, not to make a story for the town, by so public a violence, as shutting her at once out of his doors; he order'd the next apartment to my Lady's to be made ready for him—while that was doing—I try'd, by all the little arts that I was mistress of, to amuse him into temper; in short, a silent grief was all I could reduce him to—on this, we took our leaves, and departed to our repose: What his was, I imagine by my own: For I never clos'd my eyes. About five, as I told you, I heard my Lady at the door; so I slip't on a gown, and sat almost an hour with her, in her own chamber.

Man. What said she, when she did not find my Lord there?

La. Grace. O! so far from being shock'd, or alarm'd at it; that she blest the occasion! and said, that in her condition, the chat of a female friend was far preferable to the best husband's company in the world.

Man. Where has she spirits to support so much insensibility?

La. Grace. Nay, 'tis incredible; for though she has lost every shilling she had in the world, and stretch'd her credit even to breaking; she rallied her own follies with such vivacity, and painted the penances, she knows she must undergo for them, in such ridiculous lights, that had not my concern for a brother been too strong for her wit, she had almost disarm'd my anger.

Man. Her mind may have another cast by this time: The most flagrant dispositions have their hours of anguish; which their pride conceals from company: But pray, Madam, how could she avoid coming down to dine?

La. Grace. O! she took care of that, before she went to bed; by ordering her woman, whenever she was ask'd for, to say she was not well.

Man.

Man. You have seen her since she was up, I presume?

La. Grace. Up! I question whether she be awake yet.

Man. Terrible! what a figure does she make now! That nature should throw away so much beauty upon a creature, to make such a flatterly use of it!

La. Grace. O fy! there is not a more elegant beauty in town, when she's dress'd.

Man. In my eye, Madam, she that's early dress'd, has ten times her elegance.

La. Grace. But she won't be long now, I believe; for I think I see her chocolate going up—Mrs. Trusty—a hem!

Mrs. Trusty comes to the door.

Man. [*Afide.*] Five o'clock in the afternoon, for a lady of quality's breakfast, is an elegant hour, indeed! which, to shew her more polite way of living too, I presume she eats in her bed.

La. Grace. [*To Mrs. Trusty.*] And when she is up, I would be glad she would let me come to her toilette—That's all, Mrs. Trusty.

Trusty. I will be sure to let her Ladyship know, Madam.
[*Exit Mrs. Trusty.*]

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir Francis Wronghead, Sir, desires to speak with you.

Man. He comes unseasonably—what shall I do with him?

La. Grace. O see him by all means, we shall have time enough; in the mean while I'll step in, and have an eye upon my Brother. Nay, nay, don't mind me—you have business—

Man. You must be obey'd— [*Retreating while Lady Grace goes out.*] Desire Sir Francis to walk in— [*Exit Servant.*]
I suppose by this time his wife worship begins to find, that the balance of his journey to London is on the wrong side.

Enter Sir Francis.

Sir Francis, your servant; how came I by the favour of this extraordinary visit?

Sir Fr. Ah! Cousin!

Man. Why that sorrowful face, man?

Sir Fr. I have no friend alive but you—

Man. I am sorry for that—but what's the matter?

Sir Fr. I have play'd the fool by this journey, I see now—for my bitter wife—

Man. What of her?

Sir Fr. Is playing the devil!

Man. Why truly, that's a part that most of your fine ladies begin with, as soon as they get to London.

Sir Fr. If I am a living man, Cousin, she has made away with above two hundred and fifty pound, since yesterday morning.

Man. Hah! I see a good housewife will do a great deal of work in a little time.

Sir Fr. Work do they call it? Fine work, indeed!

Man.

Man. Well, but how do you mean, made away with it? What, she has laid it out, may be—but I suppose you have an account of it.

Sir Fr. Yes, yes, I have had the account, indeed, but I mun needs say, it's a very sorry one.

Man. Pray let's hear.

Sir Fr. Why, first, I let her have a hundred and fifty, to get things handsome about her, to let the world see that I was somebody! and I thought that sum was very genteel.

Man. Indeed I think so; and in the country, might have serv'd her a twelvemonth.

Sir Fr. Why so it might—but here in this fine tawn, forsooth! it could not get thro' four and twenty hours—for, in half that time, it was all squandered away in bawbles, and new-fashion'd trumpery.

Man. O! for the ladies in London, Sir Francis, all this might be necessary.

Sir Fr. Noa! there's the plague on't! the devil o'one useful thing do I see for it, but two pair of lac'd shoes, and those stond me in three paund three shillings a pair too.

Man. Dear Sir! this is nothing! Why we have city wives here, that, while their good man is selling three penny worth of fugar, will give you twenty pound for a short apron.

Sir Fr. Mercy on us! what a mortal poor devil is a husband?

Man. Well, but I hope you have nothing else to complain of?

Sir Fr. Ah! would I could say so too—but there's another hundred behind yet, that goes more to my heart, than all that went before it.

Man. And how might that be dispos'd of?

Sir Fr. Troth, I am almost ashamed to tell you.

Man. Out with it.

Sir Fr. Why she has been at an assembly.

Man. What, since I saw you! I thought you had all supt at home last night?

Sir Fr. Why so we did—and all as merry as grigs—I'cod, my heart was so open, that I tofs'd another hundred into her apron, to go out early this morning with—But the cloth was no sooner taken away, than in comes my lady Townly here (—who between you and I—mum, has had the devil to pay yonder—) with another rantipol dame of quality, and out they must have her, they said, to introduce her at my lady Noble's assembly forsooth—a few words, you may be sure, made the bargain—so, bawnce; and away they drive as if the devil had got into the coach-box—so about four or five in the morning—home again comes Madam, with her eyes a foot deep in her head—and my poor hundred pound left behind her at the hazard-table.

Man. All lost at dice.

Sir Fr. Every shilling—among a parcel of pig-tail puppies, and pale-faced women of quality.

Man.

Man. But pray, Sir Francis, how came you, after you found her so ill a housewife of one sum, so soon to trust her with another?

Sir Fr. Why, truly, I mun say that was partly my own fault: for if I had not been a blab of my tongue, I believe that last hundred might have been sav'd.

Man. How so?

Sir Fr. Why, like an owl, as I was, out of good will, forsooth, partly to keep her in humour, I mun needs tell her of the thousand pound a year, I had just got the promise of—I'cod! she lays her claws upon it that moment, said it was owing to her advice, and truly she would have her share on't.

Man. What, before you had it yourself?

Sir Fr. Why ay, that's what I told her—My dear, said I, mayhap I mayn't receive the first quarter on't this half year.

Man. Sir Francis, I have heard you, with a great deal of patience, and I really feel compassion for you.

Sir Fr. Truly and well you may, Cousin, for I don't see that my wife's goodness is a bit the better, for bringing her to London.

Man. If you remember, I gave you a hint of it.

Sir Fr. Why ay, it's true you did so: But the devil himself could not have believ'd she would have rid post to him.

Man. Sir, if you stay but a fortnight in this town, you will every day see hundreds as fast upon the gallop, as she is.

Sir Fr. Ah! this London is a bafe place indeed—waunds, if things should happen to go wrong with me at Westminster, at this rate how the devil shall I keep out of a jail?

Man. Why truly, there seems to be but one way to avoid it.

Sir Fr. Ah! would you could tell me that, Cousin!

Man. The way lies plain before you, Sir; the same road that brought you hither will carry you safe home again.

Sir Fr. Ods flesh! Cousin, what, and leave a thousand pound a year behind me?

Man. Pooh, pooh; leave any thing behind you, but your family, and you are a faver by it.

Sir Fr. Ay, but consider, Cousin, what a scurvy figure shall I make in the country, if I come dawn withawt it?

Man. You will make a much more lamentable figure in a jail without it.

Sir Fr. Mayhap 'at you have no great opinion of it then, Cousin?

Man. Sir Francis, to do you the service of a real friend, I must speak very plainly to you: you don't see half the ruin that's before you!

Sir Fr. Good lack! how may yow mean, Cousin?

Man. In one word, your whole affairs stand thus—In a week, you will lose your seat at Westminster: In a fortnight, my Lady will run you into a jail, by keeping the best company—In four and twenty hours, your daughter will run away with a sharper, because she has not been used to better company: And your son will

will steal into marriage with a cast mistress, because he has not been used to any company at all.

Sir Fr. I' th' name o' gooduefs, why should you think all this?

Man. Because I have proof of it; in short, I know so much of their secrets, that if all this is not prevented to-night, it will be out of your power to do it to-morrow morning.

Sir Fr. Mercy upon us! you frighten me—Well, Sir, I will be govern'd by you: But what am I to do in this case?

Man. I have not time here to give you proper instructions: but about eight this evening, I'll call at your lodgings, and there you shall have full conviction, how much I have it at heart, to serve you.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, my Lord desires to speak with you.

Man. I'll wait upon him.

Sir Fr. Well then, I'll go straight home, naw.

Man. At eight depend upon me.

Sir Fr. Ah, dear Cousin! I shall be bound to you as long as I live. Mercy deliver us! what a terrible journey have I made on't.

[Ex. severally.]

The SCENE opens to a dressing-room. Lady Townly, as just up, walks to her toilette, leaning on Mrs. Trusty.

Trus. Dear Madam, what should make your Ladyship so out of order?

La. Town. How is it possible to be well, where one is kill'd for want of sleep?

Trus. Dear me! it was so long before you rung, Madam, I was in hopes your Ladyship had been finely compos'd.

La. Town. Compos'd! why I have lain in an inn here! this house is worse than an inn with ten stage-coaches! what between my Lord's impertinent people of business in a morning, and the intolerable thick shoes of footmen at noon, one has not a wink all night.

Trus. Indeed, Madam, it's a great pity my Lord can't be persuaded into the hours of people of quality—Though I must say that, Madam, your Ladyship is certainly the best matrimonial manager in town.

La. Town. Oh you are quite mistaken, Trusty; I manage very ill; for, notwithstanding all the power I have, by never being over-fond of my Lord—yet I want money infinitely oftner that he is willing to give it me.

Trus. Ah! if his Lordship could but be brought to play himself, Madam, then he might feel what it is to want money.

La. Town. Oh, don't talk of it; do you know that I am undone, Trusty?

Trus. Mercy forbid, Madam.

La. Town. Broke, ruin'd, plunder'd!—stripp'd, even to a confiscation of my last guinea.

Trus. You don't tell me so, Madam!

La.

La. Town. And where to raise ten pound in the world—what is to be done, Trusty?

Truf. Truly I wish I were wise enough to tell you, Madam: but may be your Ladyship may have a run of better fortune, upon some of the good company that comes here to-night.

La. Town. But I have not a single guinea, to try my fortune.

Truf. Hah, that's a bad business indeed, Madam—adad, I have a thought in my head, Madam, if it is not too late—

La. Town. Out with it quickly then, I beseech thee.

Truf. Has not the steward something of fifty pounds, Madam, that you left in his hands, to pay somebody about this time?

La. Town. O, ay! I had forgot—'twas to—a—what's his filthy name?

Truf. Now I remember, Madam, 'twas to Mr. Luteftring your old mercer, that your Ladyship turn'd off, about a year ago, because he wou'd trust you no longer.

La. Town. The very wretch; if he has not paid it, run quickly, dear Trusty, and bid him bring it hither immediately—[*Exit Trusty.*] Well, sure mortal woman never had such fortune, five, five and nine, against poor seven for ever!—no, after that horrid bar of my chance, that Lady Wronghead's fatal red fist upon the table, I saw it was impossible, ever to win another stake—sit up all night, lose all one's money, dream of winning thousands, wake without a shilling; and then—how like a hag I look! in short—the pleasures of life are not worth this disorder: if it were not for shame now, I could almost think, Lady Grace's sober scheme not quite so ridiculous—if my wife Lord could but hold his tongue for a week, 'tis odds but I should hate the town in a fortnight—but I will not be driven out of it, that's positive.

[*Trusty returns.*]

Truf. O Madam, there is no bearing it, Mr. Luteftring was just let in at the door, as I came to the stair foot; and the steward is now actually paying him the money in the hall.

La. Town. Run to the stair case head, again—and scream to him, that I must speak with him this instant. [*Truf. runs out and speaks.*]

Truf. Mr. Poundage—a hem! Mr. Poundage, a word with you quickly. [*without.*]

Pound. [*within*] I'll come to you presently.

Truf. Presently won't do, man, you must come this minute.

[*without.*]

Pound. I am but just paying a little money here. [*without.*]

Truf. Cods my life, paying money? is the man distracted? Come here, I tell you, to my Lady, this moment, quick. [*without.*]

[*Trusty returns.*]

La. Town. Will the monster come, or no?—

Truf. Yes, I hear him, now, Madam, he is hobbling up, as fast as he can.

La. Town. Don't let him come in—for he will keep such a babbling

babbling about his accounts—my brain is not able to bear him,
[Poundage comes to the door with a money bag in his hand.]

Truf. O, it's well you are come, Sir: where's the fifty pound?

Pound. Why here it is; if you had not been in such haste, I would have paid it by this time—the man's now writing a receipt, below for it.

Truf. No matter, my Lady says, you must not pay him with that money, there is not enough, it seems; there's a pistole and a guinea, that is not good, in it—besides there is a mistake in the account too—[*twisting the bag from him*] but she is not at leisure to examine it now; so you must bid Mr. What d'ye-call-um call another time.

La. Town. What is all that noise there?

Pound. Why an it please your Ladyship.——

La. Town. Pr'ythee, don't plague me now, but do as you were order'd.

Pound. Nay, what your Ladyship pleases, Madam—[*Ex. Pound.*

Truf. There they are, Madam—[*pours the Money out of the Bag*] The pretty things—were so near falling into a nasty tradesman's hands, I protest it made me tremble for them—I fancy your Ladyship had as good give me that bad guinea, for luck's sake—thank you, Madam. [Takes a guinea.

La. Town. Why, I did not bid you take it.

Truf. No, but your Ladyship look'd as if you were just going to bid me, and so I was willing to save you the trouble of speaking, Madam.

La. Town. Well, thou hast deserv'd it, and so, for once—but hark, don't I hear the man making a noise yonder? though I think now we may compound for a little of his ill humour.—

Truf. I'll listen.

La. Town. Pr'ythee do. [Trusty goes to the door.

Truf. Ay, they are at it, Madam—he is in a bitter passion with poor Poundage—bless me! I believe he'll beat him—mercy on us! how the wretch swears?

La. Town. And a sober citizen too; that's a shame!

Truf. Hah, I think all's silent, of a sudden—may be the porter has knock'd him down—I'll step and see—[*Ex. Truf.*

La. Town. Those trades people are the troublesome creatures; no words will satisfy them! [Trusty returns.

Truf. O Madam, undone, undone! My Lord has just bolted out upon the man, and is hearing all his pitiful story over—if your Ladyship pleases to come hither, you may hear him yourself!

La. Town. No matter: It will come round presently: I shall have it all from my Lord, without losing a word by the way, I'll warrant you.

Truf. O lud, Madam! here's my Lord just coming in.

La. Town. Do you get out of the way then. [*Ex. Trusty.*
I am afraid I want spirits; but he will soon give 'em me.

Enter

Enter Lord Townly.

L. Town. How comes it, Madam, that a tradesman dares be clamorous, in my house, for money due to him, from you?

La. Town. You don't expect, my Lord, that I should answer for other people's Impertinence.

L. Town. I expect, Madam, you should answer for your own extravagances, that are the occasion of it—I thought I had given you money three Months ago, to satisfy all these sort of people.

La. Town. Yes, but you see they never are to be satisfied.

L. Town. Nor am I, Madam longer to be abus'd thus! what's become of the last five hundred, I gave you?

La. Town. Gone.

L. Town. Gone! what way, Madam?

La. Town. Half the town over, I believe, by this time.

L. Town. 'Tis well; I see ruin will make no impression, 'till it falls upon you.

La. Town. In short, my Lord, 'if money is always the subject of our conversation, I shall make you no answer.

L. Town. Madam, Madam! I will be heard, and make you answer.

La. Town. Make me! then I must tell you, my Lord, this is a language I have not been us'd to, and I won't bear it.

L. Town. Come, come, Madam, you shall bear a great deal more, before I part with you.

La. Town. My Lord, if you insult me, you will have as much to bear, on your side, I can assure you.

L. Town. Pooh! your spirit grows ridiculous—you have neither honour, worth, or innocence, to support it!

La. Town. You'll find, at least, I have resentment, and do you look well to the provocation.

L. Town. After those you have given me, Madam, 'tis almost infamous to talk with you.

La. Town. I scorn your imputation, and your menaces: the narrowness of your heart's your monitor; 'tis there, there my Lord, you are wounded; you have less to complain of than many husbands of an equal rank to you.

L. Town. Death, Madam, do you presume upon your corporal merit, that, your person's less tainted than your mind: is it there, there alone an honest husband can be injur'd? Have you not every other vice that can debase your birth, or stain the heart of woman? Is not your health, your beauty, husband, fortune, family disclaim'd, for nights consum'd in riot and extravagance? The wanton does no more; if she conceals her shame, does less: and sure the dissolute avow'd, as sorely wrongs my honour and my quiet.

La. Town. I see, my Lord, what sort of wife might please you,

L. Town. Ungrateful woman! could you have seen yourself,
G you

you in yourself had seen her—I am amaz'd our legislature has left no precedent of a divorce for this more visible injury, this adultery of the mind, as well as that of the person! when a woman's whole heart is alienated to pleasure I have no share in, what is't to me, whether a black ace, or a powder'd cock-comb has possession of it.

La. Town. If you have not found it yet, my Lord; this is not the way to get possession of mine, depend upon it.

L. Town. That, Madam, I have long despair'd of; and since our happiness cannot be mutual, 'tis fit, that with our hearts, our persons too should separate—This house you sleep no more in: Tho' your content might grossly feed upon the dishonour of a husband, yet my desires would starve upon the features of a wife.

La. Town. Your style, my Lord, is much of the same delicacy with your sentiments of honour.

L. Town. Madam, Madam! this is no time for compliments—I have done with you.

La. Town. If we had never met, my Lord, I had not broke my heart for it; but have a care, I may not, perhaps, be so easily recall'd as you imagine.

L. Town. Recall'd!—Who's there? [*Enter a Servant.* Desire my Sister and Mr. Manly to walk up.

La. Town. My Lord, you may proceed as you please; but pray what indiscretions have I committed, that are not daily practis'd by a hundred other women of quality?

L. Town. 'Tis not the number of ill wives, Madam, that makes the patience of a husband less contemptible: and tho' a bad one may be the best man's lot, yet he'll make a better figure in the world, that keeps his misfortunes out of doors, than he that tamely keeps her within.

La. Town. I don't know what figure you may make, my Lord, but I shall have no reason to be ashamed of mine, in whatever company I may meet you.

L. Town. Be sparing of your spirit, Madam, you'll need it to support you.

Enter Lady Grace and Manly.

Mr. Manly, I have an act of friendship to beg of you, which wants more apologies, than words can make for it.

Man. Then pray make none, my Lord, that I may have the greater merit in obliging you.

L. Town. Sister, I have the same excuse to intreat of you too.

La. Grace. To your request, I beg, my Lord.

L. Town. Thus then—as you both were present at my ill-consider'd marriage, I now desire you each will be a witness of my determin'd separation—I know, Sir, your good-nature, and my Sister's, must be shock'd at the office I impose on you; but, as I don't ask your justification of my cause; so I hope you are conscious—that ill woman can't reproach you, if you are silent, upon her side.

Man.

Man. My Lord, I never thought, 'till now, it could be difficult to oblige you.

La. Grace. [*Aside.*] Heavens, how I tremble!

L. Town. For you, my Lady Townly, I need not here repeat the provocations of my parting with you—the world, I fear, is too well inform'd of them—For the good Lord, your dead Father's sake, I will still support you as his daughter—As the Lord Townly's wife, you have had very thing a fond husband could bestow, and (to our mutual thame I speak it) more than happy wives desire—But those indulgences must end; state, equipage, and splendor but ill become the vices that mis-use 'em.—The decent necessaries of life shall be supply'd—but not one article to luxury! Not even the coach, that waits to carry you from hence, shall you ever use again! Your tender Aunt, my Lady Lovemore, with tears this morning, has consented to receive you; where, if time, and your condition bring you to a due reflection, your allowance shall be increased—But, if you still are lavish of your little, or pine for past licentious pleasures, that little shall be less; nor will I call that soul my friend, that names you in my hearing.

La. Grace. My heart bleeds for her! [*Aside.*]

L. Town. O Manly, look there; turn back thy thoughts with me, and witness to my growing love; there was a time when I believ'd that form incapable of vice, or of decay: There I propos'd the partner of an easy home: There, I, for ever, hop'd to find a chearful companion, an agreeable intimate, a faithful friend, a useful helpmate, and a tender mother—But oh, how bitter now the disappointment!

Man. The world is different in its sense of happiness: Offended as you are, I know you will still be just.

L. Town. Fear me not.

Man. This last reproach, I see, has struck her. [*Aside.*]

L. Town. No, let me not (though I this moment cast her from my heart for ever) let me not urge her punishment beyond her crimes—I know the world is fond of any tale that feeds its appetite of scandal: And as I am conscious, severities of this kind seldom fail of imputations too gross to mention, I here, before you both, acquit her of the least suspicion rais'd against the honour of my bed. Therefore, when abroad her conduct may be question'd, do her fame that justice.

La. Town. O Sister! [*Turns to Lady Grace weeping.*]

L. Town. When I am spoken of, where without favour this action may be canvass'd, relate but half my provocations, and give me up to censure. [*Going.*]

La. Town. Support me, save me, hide me from the world. [*Falls on Lady Grace's neck.*]

L. Town. [*Returning.*] —I had forgot me—You have no share in my resentment, therefore, as you have liv'd in friend-

ship with her, your parting may admit of gentler terms, than suit the honour of an injur'd husband. [*Offers to go out.*]

Man. [*Interposing.*] My Lord, you must not, shall not leave her, thus; one moment's stay can do your cause no wrong, if looks can speak the anguish of the heart, I'll answer with my life, there's something labouring in her mind, that, would you bear the hearing, might deserve it.

L. Town. Consider, since we no more can meet; press not my staying, to insult her.

La. Town. Yet, stay, my Lord—the little I would say, will not deserve any insult; and undeserv'd, I know your nature gives it not. But as you've call'd in friends, to witness your resentment, let them be equal hearers of my last reply.

L. Town. I shan't refuse you that, Madam—be it so.

La. Town. My Lord, you ever have complain'd, I wanted love; but as you kindly have allow'd I never gave it to another; so when you hear the story of my heart, though you may still complain, you will not wonder at my coldness.

La. Grace. This promises a reverse of temper. [*Apart.*]

Man. This, my Lord, you are concern'd to hear.

L. Town. Proceed, I am attentive.

La. Town. Before I was your bride, my Lord, the flattering world had talk'd me into beauty; which, at my glass, my youthful vanity confirm'd: wild with that fame, I thought mankind my slaves, I triumph'd over hearts, while all my pleasure was their pain: yet was my own so equally insensible to all, that when a father's firm commands enjoined me to make choice of one, I even there declin'd the liberty he gave, and to his own election yielded up my youth—his tender care, my Lord directed him to you—our hands were joined! but still my heart was wedded to its folly! My only joy was power, command, society, profuseness, and to lead in pleasures! The husband's right to rule, I thought a vulgar law, which only the deform'd, or meanly spirited obey'd! I knew no directors but my passions, no master but my will! Even you, my Lord, some time o'ercome by love, were pleas'd with my delights; nor then foresaw this misuse of your indulgence—and though I call myself ungrateful, while I own it, yet as a truth, it cannot be deny'd—that kind indulgence has undone me; it added strength to my habitual failings, and in a heart thus warm, in wild unthinking life, no wonder if the gentler sense of love was lost.

L. Town. O Manly! where has this creature's heart been buried? [*Apart.*]

Man. If yet recoverable—How vast a treasure? [*Apart.*]

La. Town. What I have said, my Lord, is not my excuse, but my confession! My errors (give 'em, if you please, a harder name) cannot be defended. No! What's in its nature wrong no words can palliate, no plea can alter! What then remains in

in my condition, but resignation to your pleasure? Time only can convince you of my future conduct: Therefore, till I have liv'd an object of forgiveness, I dare not hope for pardon—The penance of a lonely contrite life were little to the innocent; but to have deserv'd this separation, will strow perpetual thorns upon my pillow.

La. Grace. O happy, heavenly hearing!

La. Town. Sister, farewell. [*Kissing her.*] Your virtue needs no warning from the shame that falls on me: But when you think I have aton'd my follies past—persuade your injur'd Brother to forgive them.

L. Town. No, Madam, your errors thus renounc'd, this instant are forgotten; so deep, so due a sense of them, has made you, what my utmost wishes form'd, and all my heart has sigh'd for.

La. Town. [*turning to Lady Grace.*] How odious does this goodness make me!

La. Grace. How amiable your thinking so!

L. Town. Long-parted friends, that pass through easy voyages of life, receive but common gladness in their meeting: But from a shipwreck sav'd, we mingle tears with our embraces.

[*Embracing Lady Townly.*]

La. Town. What works, what love, what duty can pay such obligations?

L. Town. Preserve but this desire to please, your power is endless.

La. Town. Oh!—'till this moment, never did I know, my Lord, I had a heart to give you.

L. Town. By heaven, this yielding hand, when first it gave you to my wishes, presented not a treasure more desirable! O Manly, Sister! as you have often shar'd in my disquiet, partake of my felicity, my new-born joy! see there the bride of my desires! This may be call'd my wedding-day!

La. Grace. Sister (for now methinks that name is dearer to my heart than ever) let me congratulate the happiness that opens to you.

Man. Long, long, and mutual may it flow.—

L. Town. To make our happiness compleat, my dear, join here with me to give a hand, that amply will repay the obligation.

La. Town. Sister, a day like this——

La. Grace. Admits of no excuse against the general joy!

[*Gives her hand to Manly.*]

Man. A joy like mine—despairs of words to speak it.

L. Town. O Manly, how the name of friend endears the Brother!

[*Embracing him.*]

Man. Your words, my Lord, will warm me to deserve them.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. My Lord, the apartments are full of masqueraders—And some people of quality there desire to see your Lordship and my Lady.

La. Town. I thought, my Lord, your orders had forbid this revelling?

L. Town. No, my dear, Manly has desir'd their admittance to-night, it seems, upon a particular occasion—Say we will wait upon them instantly. *[Exit Servant.]*

La. Town. I shall be but ill company to them.

L. Town. No matter: not to see them, would on a sudden be too particular—Lady Grace will assist you to entertain them.

La. Town. With her, my Lord, I shall be always easy—Sister, to your unerring virtue I now commit the guidance of my future days—

Never the paths of pleasure more to tread,
But where your guarded innocence shall lead.
For in the married state, the world must own,
Divided happiness was never known.

To make it mutual, nature points the way:

Let husbands govern: Gentle wives obey. *[Exeunt.]*

The SCENE opening to another apartment, discovers a great number of people in masquerade, talking all together, and playing upon one another: Lady Wronghead as a shepherdess; Jenny, as a Nun; the Squire as a running footman; and the Count in a Domino. After some time, Lord and Lady Townly, with Lady Grace, enter to them unmask'd.

L. Town. So here's a great deal of company.

La. Grace. A great many people, my Lord, but no company—as you'll find—for here's one now, that seems to have a mind to entertain us.

[A Mask, after some affected gesture, makes up to Lady Townly.]

Mask. Well, dear lady Townly, shan't we see you by-and-by?

La. Town. I don't know you, Madam.

Mask. Don't you, seriously? *[In a squeaking tone.]*

La. Town. Not I, indeed.

Mask. Well, that's charming! but can't you guess!

La. Town. Yes, I could guess wrong, I believe.

Mask. That's what I'd have you do.

La. Town. But Madam, if I don't know you at all, is not that as well?

Mask. Ay, but you do know me.

La. Town. Dear Sister, take her off o'my hands; there's no bearing this. *[Apart.]*

La. Grace. I fancy I know you, Madam.

Mask. I fancy you don't: what makes you think you do?

La. Grace. Because I have heard you talk.

Mask. Ay, but you don't know my voice, I'm sure.

La. Grace. There is something in your wit and humour, Madam, so very much your own, it is impossible you can be any body but my Lady Trifle.

Mask. *[Unmasking.]* Dear Lady Grace, thou art a charming creature. La.

La. *Grace*. Is there nobody else we know here?

Mask. O dear, yes! I have found out fifty already.

La. *Grace*. Pray, who are they?

Mask. O charming company! there's Lady Ramble—Lady Riot—Lady Kill-Care—Lady Squander—Lady Strip—Lady Pawn—and the Dutchess of Single-Guinea.

L. *Town*. Is not it hard, my dear, that people of sense and probity are sometimes forc'd to seem fond of such company? [*Apart*.

La. *Town*. My Lord, it will always give me pain to remember their acquaintance, but none to drop it immediately. [*Apart*.

La. *Grace*. But you have given us no account of the men, Madam. Are they good for any thing?

Mask. O yes! you must know, I always find out them, by their endeavours to find out me.

La. *Grace*. Pray, who are they?

Mask. Why, for your men of tip-top wit and pleasure, about town, there's—my Lord Bite—Lord Archwag—young Brazen-Wit—Lord Timber-down—Lord Joint-Life—and Lord Mortgage. Then for your pretty fellows only—there's Sir Powder Peacock—Lord Lapwing—Billy Magpye—Beau Frightful—Sir Paul Plaistercrown, and the Marquis of Monkey-man.

La. *Grace*. Right, and these are fine gentlemen that never want elbow-room at an assembly.

Mask. The rest, I suppose, by their tawdry, hired habits, are tradesmen's wives, inns-of-court beaux, Jews, and kept mistresses.

L. *Town*. An admirable collection!

La. *Grace*. Well, of all our publick diversions, I am amaz'd how this that is so very expensive, and has so little to show for it, can draw so much company together.

L. *Town*. O! if it were not expensive, the better sort would not come into it: and because money can purchase a ticket, the common people scorn to be kept out of it.

Mask. Right, my Lord. Poor Lady Grace, I suppose you are under the same astonishment, that an opera should draw so much good company.

La. *Grace*. Not at all, Madam; it's an easier matter sure to gratify the ear, than the understanding. But have you no notion, Madam, of receiving pleasure and profit at the same time?

Mask. Oh, quite none! unless it be sometimes winning a great stake; laying down a *vole sans prendre* may come up to the profitable pleasure you were speaking of.

L. *Town*. You seem attentive, my dear? [*Apart*.

La. *Town*. I am, my Lord; and amaz'd at my own follies, so strongly painted in another woman. [*Apart*.

La. *Grace*. But see, my Lord, we had best adjourn our debate, I believe, for there are some Masks that seem to have a mind to divert other people as well as themselves.

L. *Town*. The least we can do is to give them a clear stage

stage then. [*A dance of masks here, in various characters.*
This was a Favour extraordinary.

Enter Manly.

O Manly, I thought we had lost you.

Man. I ask pardon, my Lord; but I have been oblig'd to look a little after my country family.

L. Town. Well, pray, what have you done with them?

Man. They are all in the house here, among the masks, my Lord; if your Lordship has curiosity enough to step into a lower apartment, in three minutes I'll give you an ample account of them.

L. Town. O! by all means: we will wait upon you.

[*The Scene shuts upon the Masks to a smaller apartment.*

Manly re enters, with Sir Francis Wronghead.

Sir Fr. Well, Cousin, you have made my very hair stand an end! Waunds, if what you tell me be true, I'll stuff my whole family into a stage coach, and trundle them into the country again on Monday morning.

Man. Stick to that, Sir, and we may yet find a way to redeem all: in the mean time, place yourself behind this screen, and for the truth of what I have told you, take the evidence of your own senses: but be sure you keep close 'till I give you the signal.

Sir. Fr. Sir, I'll warrant you—Ah, my Lady, my Lady Wronghead! what a bitter business have you drawn me into?

Man. Hush! to your post; here comes one couple already.

[*Sir Fr. retires behind the screen. Ex. Man.*

Enter Myrtila, with Squire Richard.

Squ. Rich. What, is this the doctor's chamber?

Myr. Yes, yes, speak softly.

Squ. Rich. Well, but where is he?

Myr. He'll be ready for us presently, but he says he can't do us the good turn, without witnesses: So, when the Count and your Sister come, you know, he and you may be fathers for one another.

Squ. Rich. Well, well, tit for tat! ay, ay, that will be friendly.

Myr. And see, here they come.

Enter Count Basset, and Miss Jenny.

C. Bas. So, so, here's your brother, and his bride before us, my dear.

Jenny. Well, I vow, my heart's at my mouth still! I thought I should never have got rid of Mama! but while she stood gaping upon the dance, I gave her the slip: lawd, do but feel how it beats here.

C. Bas. O the pretty flutterer! I protest, my dear, you have put mine in the same palpitation!

Jenny. Ah! you say so—but let's see now—O lud! I vow, it thumps purely—well, well, I see it will do, and so where's the parson?

C. Bas.

C. Bas. Mrs. Myrtilia, will you be so good as to see if the doctor's ready for us?

Myr. He only staid for you, Sir: I'll fetch him immediately. [Exit Myr.]

Jenny. Pray, Sir, am not I to take place of Mama, when I'm a Countess?

C. Bas. No doubt on't, my dear.

Jenny. O lud! how her back will be up then, when she meets me at an assembly? or you and I in our coach and six, at Hyde-Park together?

C. Bas. Ay! or when she hears the box-keepers, at an opera, call out—The Countess of Bassett's servants!

Jenny. Well, I say it, that will be delicious: and then, may-hap, to have a fine gentleman with a star and a what-d'ye-call-um ribbon, lead me to my chair, with his hat under his arm all the way: hold up, says the chairman, and so, says I, my Lord, your humble servant. I suppose, Madam, says he, we shall see you at my Lady Quadrille's? Ay, ay, to be sure, my Lord, says I—so in troops I, with my hoop stuff'd up to my forehead! and away they trot; swing swang! with my tassels dangling, and my flambeaux blazing, and—Oh! it's a charming thing to be a woman of quality.

C. Bas. Well, I see that plainly, my dear, there's ne'er a Dutchess of 'em all will become an equipage like you.

Jenny. Well, well, do you find equipage and I'll find airs, I warrant you.

Squ. Rich. Truth, I think this masquerading's the merriest game that ever I saw in my life! thof, in my mind, and there were but a little wrestling, or cudgel-playing now, it would help it hugely! but what a-rope makes the parson stay so?

C. Bas. Oh, here he comes, I believe.

Enter Myrtilia, with a Constable.

Const. Well, Madam, pray which is the party that wants a spice of my office here?

Myr. That's the gentleman. [Pointing to the Count.]

C. Bas. He'y-day, what, in masquerade, doctor?

Const. Doctor, Sir, I believe you have mistaken your man: but if you are call'd Count Bassett, I have a billet-doux in my hand for you, that will set you right presently.

C. Bas. What the devil's the meaning of all this?

Const. Only my Lord Chief Justice's warrant against you for forgery, Sir.

C. Bas. Blood and thunder!

Const. And so, Sir, if you please to pull off your fool's frock there, I'll wait upon you to the next justice of peace immediately.

Jenny. O dear me! what's the matter? [Trembling.]

C. Bas. O! nothing, only a masquerading frolick, my dear. Squ.

74 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND: Or,

Squ. Rich. Oh ho! is that all?

Sir Fr. No, sirrah! that is not all.

[*Sir Fr. coming softly behind the Squire, knocks him down with his Cane.*]

Enter Manly.

Squ. Rich. O lawd, O lawd! he has beaten my brains out.

Man. Hold, hold, Sir Francis, have a little mercy upon my poor god-son, pray, Sir.

Sir Fr. Wounds, Cozen, I han't patience.

C. Bas. Manly! nay, then I am blown to the devil. [*Aside.*]

Squ. Rich. O my head! my head!

Enter Lady Wronghead.

La. Wrong. What's the matter, here, gentlemen? for heaven's sake! what, are you murdering my children?

Const. No, no, Madam, no murder; only a little suspicion of felony, that's all.

Sir Fr. [*To Jenny.*] And for you, Mrs. Hot-upon't, I could find in my heart to make you wear that habit, as long as you live, you jade you. Do you know, hussy, that you are within two minutes of marrying a pick-pocket?

C. Bas. So, so, all's out, I find. [*Aside.*]

Jenny. O the mercy! why, pray, Papa, is not the Count a man of quality then?

Sir Fr. O yes! one of the unhang'd ones, it seems.

La. Wrong. [*Aside.*] Married! O the confident thing! there was his urgent business then!—sighted for her! I han't patience!—and for aught I know, I have been all this while making a friendship with a highway-man!

Man. Mr. Constable! secure that door there.

Sir Fr. Ah my Lady! my Lady! this comes of your journey to London! but now I'll have a frolick of my own, Madam; therefore pack up your trumpery this very night, for the moment my horses are able to crawl, you and your brats shall make a journey into the country again.

La. Wrong. Indeed, you are mistaken, Sir Francis—I shall not stir out of town yet, I promise you.

Sir Fr. Not stir, wounds! Madam——

Man. Hold, Sir—if you'll give me leave a little—I fancy I shall prevail with my Lady to think better on't.

Sir Fr. Ah, Cousin! you are a friend indeed!

Man. [*Apart to my Lady.*] Look you, Madam, as to the favour you design'd me, in sending this spurious letter inclosed to my Lady Grace, all the revenge I have taken, is to have saved your son and daughter from ruin—now if you will take them fairly and quietly into the country again, I will save your Ladyship from ruin.

La. Wrong. What do you mean, Sir?

Man. Why, Sir Francis—shall never know what is in this letter;

letter; look upon it. How it came into my hands you shall know at leisure.

La. Wrong. Ha! my billet-doux to the Count, and an appointment in it! I shall sink with confusion!

Man. What shall I say to Sir Francis, Madam?

La. Wrong. Dear Sir, I am in such a trembling! preserve my honour, and I am all obedience. [*Apart to Manly.*]

Man. Sir Francis—my Lady is ready to receive your commands for her journey, whenever you please to appoint it.

Sir Fr. Ah Cousin! I doubt I am obliged to you for it.

Man. Come, come, Sir Francis! take it as you find it. Obedience in a wife is a good thing, though it were ever so wonderful!—and now, Sir, we have nothing to do but to dispose of this gentleman.

C. Basf. Mr. Manly! Sir, I hope you won't ruin me.

Man. Did not you forge this note for five hundred pound, Sir?

C. Basf. Sir—I see you know the world, and therefore I shall not pretend to prevaricate—but as it has hurt no body yet, Sir, I beg you will not stigmatize me; since you have spoil'd my fortune in one family, I hope you won't be so cruel to a young fellow, as to put it out of my power, Sir, to make it in another, Sir.

Man. Look you, Sir, I have not much time to waste with you: but if you expect mercy yourself, you must show it to one, you have been cruel to.

C. Basf. Cruel, Sir?

Man. Have not you ruin'd this young woman?

C. Basf. I, Sir?

Man. I know you have—therefore you can't blame her, if in the fact you are charged with, she is a principal witness against you. However you have one, and one only chance to get off with. Marry her this instant—and you take off her evidence.

C. Basf. Dear Sir!

Man. No words, Sir; a wife, or a Mitimus.

C. Basf. Lord, Sir, this is the most unmerciful mercy.

Man. A private penance, or a publick one—constable!

C. Basf. Hold, Sir, since you are pleas'd to give me my choice; I will not make so ill a compliment to the Lady as not to give her the preference.

Man. It must be done this minute, Sir: the chaplain you expected is still within call.

C. Basf. Well, Sir—since it must be so—come, spouse—I am not the first of the fraternity, that has run his head into one noose, to keep it out of another.

Myr. Come, Sir, don't repine: marriage is, at worst, but playing upon the square.

C. Basf. Ay, but the worst of the match too, is the devil.

Man.

Man. Well, Sir, to let you see it is not so bad as you think it. As a reward for her honesty, in detecting your practices, instead of the forged bill, you would have put upon her, there's a real one of five hundred pounds, to begin a new honey-moon with.

[*Gives it to Myrtille.*]

C. Bas. Sir, this is so generous an act——

Man. No compliments, dear Sir—I am not at leisure now to receive them: Mr. Constable, will you be so good as to wait upon this gentleman into the next room, and give this Lady in marriage to him?

Const. Sir, I will do it faithfully.

C. Bas. Well! five hundred will serve to make a handsome push with, however.

[*Ex. Count, Myr. and Const.*]

Sir Fr. And that I may be sure my family's rid of him for ever—come, my Lady, let's even take our children along with us, and be all witness of the ceremony.

[*Ex. Sir Fr. Lady Wrong. Miss and Squire.*]

Man. Now, my Lord, you may enter.

Enter Lord and Lady Townly, and Lady Grace.

L. Town. So, Sir, I give you joy of your negociation.

Man. You overheard it all, I presume?

La. Grace. From first to last, Sir.

La. Town. Never were knaves and fools better disposed of.

Man. A sort of poetical justice, my Lord, not so much above the judgment of a modern comedy.

L. Town. To heighten that resemblance, I think, Sister, there only wants your rewarding the hero of the fable, by naming the day of his happiness.

La. Grace. This day, to-morrow, every hour, I hope, of life to come, will shew I want not inclination to compleat it.

Man. Whatever I may want, Madam, you will always find endeavours to deserve you.

L. Town. Then all are happy.

La. Town. Sister! I give you joy! consummate as the happiest pair can boast.

In you, methinks, as in a glass, I see
The happiness, that once advanc'd to me.
So visible the bliss, so plain the way,
How was it possible my sense could stray?
But, now, a convert, to this truth, I come,
That married happiness is never found from home.

F I N I S.